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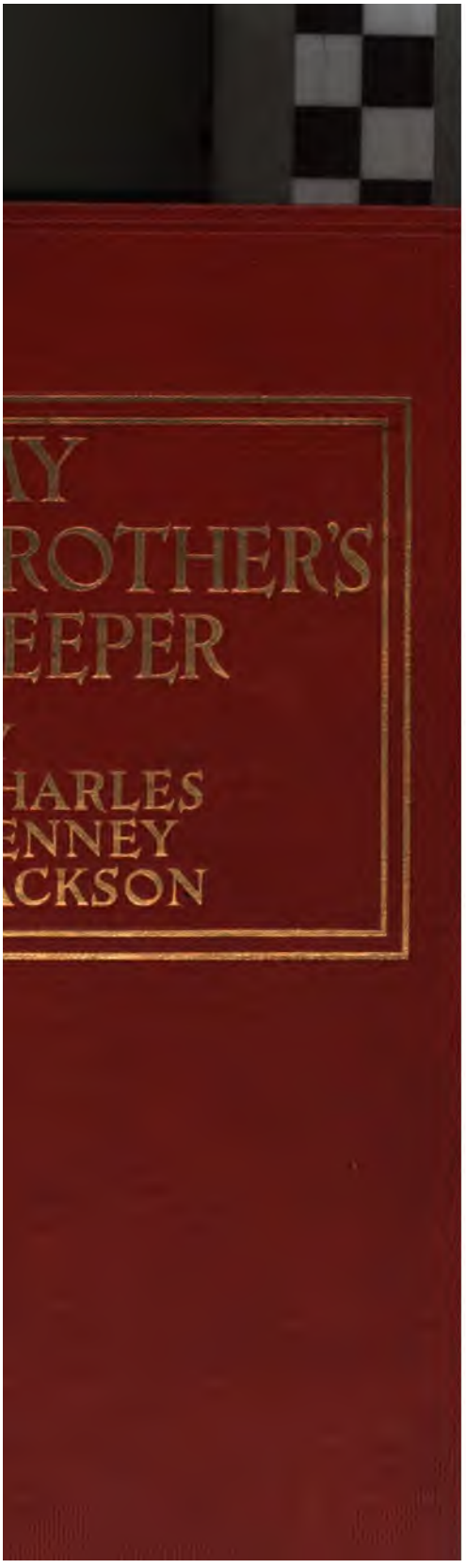
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MY BROTHER'S KEEPER

"Can a woman be great enough for this?"

MY BROTHER'S KEEPER

By
CHARLES TENNEY JACKSON
Author of
THE DAY OF SOULS

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
ARTHUR WILLIAM BROWN

INDIANAPOLIS
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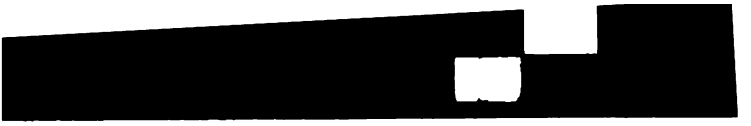

MY BROTHER'S KEEPER

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CHAPTER I

THE hunted man's left arm rose slowly until his hand rested on the iron post supporting the elevated railway spanning the Chicago street, his face sank to the crook of his elbow, and, above this shield, and under his gray hat, his eyes were leveled at his enemy a block away on the farther curb.

The sun was very bright. To his right, another square from the Alley L, the passing people were clear in color, distinct in array, against the mighty bulk of the church across the way; up the broad steps between the crosses of stone on the balustrades, these distinctive, beautifully gowned women, singly, or in twos and threes, or in groups entered the shadow below the intricate gates of bronze—a pageant like the pictures of a biograph, a processional of moderns linking back to some festival of the barbaric ages of faith. The hunted man saw, past the church, its Gothic tower in the sunlight, a patch of lake, blue, rippling under overarching elms

which showed a film of green on the Easter morning. From this his alert glance shot back the other way at the plain-clothes man who stood in brief baffled inquiry on the corner, and then came on.

A train shot along the overhanging structure; the shock on the cool metal stung the hunted man's fingers, the vibrant snarl tensed his brain, already acute with caution and the need of fear. His right hand stole back to the rubber grip of the automatic pistol in his pocket, but his figure did not stir from its mimicry protection of the iron frame casting its shadow about him; his eyes did not lose their watching of the plain-clothes man.

A group of people were coming from across the street and along to the Alley L. The fugitive's glance searched them incessantly, and when they had neared him in his shelter, the women's rich skirts touching him, with another flit of his eyes, his hawk's profile sharp in the sun, at the pursuer a block behind, he stepped out in pace with them and went along toward the church. They saw a big man of rather unwieldy figure curiously at odds with the lightness of his tread, an inexplicable grace such as the life of the open gives; when he looked once at them they saw a full, round face, unstirred, stealthily complacent, the gray eyes bold in their wary, brief intent—a face which, on the side view, took again its verisimilitude of a hawk's under the gray slouch hat. He trailed the fashionable women, the silk-hatted Easter men, his glance now ahead, for on the

corner opposite the church a uniformed patrolman stood, his lazy baton flashing as did the spokes of the carriage wheels, the flirting harness of the horses, full-lifed in the morning, stretching their necks, twisting their red tongues about the bits, with nervous starts checked by the immobile coachmen.

At sight of the bluecoat the hunted man fell back a step. He looked at the enemy behind with incredible swiftness, and then came on with the group. And slowly these turned in to a small side door of the church, its shadows deep over the young sward. For a moment the man stood alone, halted, clear in the marvelous brightness—alien, hostile, poised in a complete cat-like patience, his eyes narrowing, conscious that before and behind his enemies could see him unobstructed.

And a strange humor lit his priest's face, the pleasure of peril, the thrill of the hunted; the butt of the gun in his pocket bulked big as the hand of a friend in the dark. Again his glance shot from one officer to the other, the patrolman yawning by the line of carriages, the detective now under the Alley L looking alertly up its sodden way. With a laugh, that was more a grimace, the hunted man walked after the Easter worshipers, up the steps and into the dim and cool recess. The usher, pallid, poker-like, the lump of his throat working over the edge of his high collar, stared at the man, who, for a moment, did not remove his hat, nor turn down his collar from his miner's blue shirt. The pale

youth, his Adam's apple throbbing like a bad conscience, was about to address the stranger when the latter suddenly looked about at the bit of grass inlaid as a jewel in the stone walk, the street beyond; and then turning, taking off his hat, he walked down the cross aisle. The detective came past the door to the corner and conferred with the policeman, who wiped his red neck with a cotton glove and shook his head. Before them the thickening array of beautifully dressed women and clean men was mounting, a flowered tide inundating the broad steps to the sanctuary. From the bronzed doors came a murmur of the organ, dreamy, sensuous, far—as the whisper of the sea's power on soft beaches, so was the Easter prelude. From under the filigree of elms, young, green, the April sun showered the lake; the world seemed a magician's crystal held to the light.

Within, far down the body of the cathedral, a slender gentleman, frock-coated, his gray underchops stuck with hair in the senile folds, had paused before his pew which the usher was making a topic of apologetic whispers. Behind them a pursy matron, an array of black and lavender, holding a gold Book of Prayer, bobbed about obstructing the rivulet of worshipers pouring down the nave. And they whispered, the gentleman, the usher like a caricature of black and white, the puffing woman; and then, with some final and proper snort, the pewholder led the way past the obstruction.

The hunted man filled the corner. He sank back,

lifting his muddy boots from the foot-rest and turned his full face with its inimitable grimace on the two. The respectables swept him with a ponderable hate; his gray upper lip lifted back at them, his eyes grew slit-wise, he appeared an animal, a thing of the outdoors, earning hate and requiting fear.

And from their stare the worshipers cringed; the little gentleman in the baggy-fronted white waistcoat and his rotund wife now looked straight ahead at the altar with its enrobing lilies, ravishing with their purity the dim recess beyond the chancel. She slid to the cushioned rest with her knees and muttered, her left hand before her head gleaming with diamonds, the gold Book of Prayer set to this jewel flashing.

The hunted man seemed seized with humor; a great slow smile was on his face, turned now back to the doors, reading each comer down the main aisle with the alert judging of the open-bred. He saw a confusing crush of Easter people blocking the vestibule and spreading within under the loft where the organ overlaid its throbbing sweetness. Beyond this a vast window, a glowing picture of women about a well with Christ haloed above, poured the sun's diffused magic, so that, from the garments of the Lord and from the simple women of Palestine, millions of jewels filtered down upon the beautiful moderns of the far-spreading auditorium—from the whiteness of the God's robe to the inordinate splendor of the women, the plumes, furs, satins, gems,

each costing more than would have ransomed Him from Calvary.

The fugitive was stilled in this sweet light, the music's purring, the overarching shadows, the ineffable spirit of peace. He seemed to have no curiosity, and no fear; after a moment, when the organ's prelude swelled to a mighty inrushing, the air vibrant, appealing with an ecstatic pathos to the souls of the throng, he sank lower, his head leaning to the crook of his folded arms, his eyes closed. Then they might have seen his weariness.

Before the lilied cloth and behind the rich woods of the chancel a cloud of white-robed youths arose, their voices breaking to praise of the Creator for the day; slowly, and with the set and practice of the theatric subtly underplaying to the senses, they came on by twos down the middle of the church, the first of the procession bearing above him a curious piece of white metal, inwrought and mysterious. Slowly the processional chanting passed; their white garments touched the man's arm on the pew end, their voices rose, the clear-eyed boys singing, and it was as if, triumphantly, a god had passed.

The tired man's eyelids fluttered, his nostrils drew from out the sensuous richness of the worship, a perfume; he drew it again and again from his dirty sleeve, the brackish sweetness of the buffalo pea-vines on the North Platte where he had lain for nine nights in the open after he killed Marty, the guard. And mingled with this was the stubborn

sulphuric tang of the chlorination mill where he had been a prisoner while the Miners' Union fought out the Bull Hill war. His tired eyes closed; the long escape, the police, the hurrying figures of the Chicago streets, where he had twisted to evade the trail; the plunging traffic and the pitiless hunt—even now the dazzling voluptuousness of the Easter, its decked women, its mighty chant, the robed procession—all this climacteric to the astonishing drama of his days, fused to a blur, keyed low, until, in a droning interchange, it was the chittering of the San Miguel in its rocky bed behind his cabin. The walls of the great church lengthened and shot up until they were cañon-high—he was a thousand miles to westward, standing by his shack door looking up the Colorado ridges, with their sparse winter-bitten pines against the flare of white peaks above the foot-hills.

For a time they did not notice him, the choristers passing, the song in air. The music lulled, was still; the clergy before the cloth of lilies went through some reverential motions, and then, in an ornate box hung to the left of the altar from the wall, a man with a bald head began to talk. The others answered, and this went on—the bald man in the white robe over black speaking, and the mumble coming from the thousands of women in the seats. The air grew warm, the earth mellowing under the delight of the spring, and within the temple it was now orientalized with odors—incense, perfumes concealing human sweat, flowers crushed, dying, the smell of birds'

feathers and the skins of animals, milliners' stuffs, and trappings but an hour out of arsenical wrappers —from all the worshipers, mute, hot, heavy, rustling, this complex and determined tribute for which they had busied themselves for days, rose to God; in templed phalanx, with their hats correct, the women hurled themselves before the Almighty.

Above, in his preaching box, the bald man, overcome by this offering, music, flowers, odors, color, warmth, this inordinate sensuousness, thrust now and then a finger between his collar and the flesh of his neck and went on talking, as he was expected to do, saying the things he was expected to say, while they listened in the proper attitudes, and thought gently after the manner of the best people, the women now and then giving an approving nod of their heads heaped high by dead birds' wings, by the hair haggled and bargained from their meager sisters of Europe, and false flowers fashioned by weary baby fingers in the reek of the cities—all of which, offered virtuously by the best people everywhere, is, therefore, considered proper before the Lord, and is so received by His minister.

But at last, in a pause of his droning, there came a snore. At first it was not recognized, and then a higher note caused silks to rustle, a hat or two creaked in their wires under the dead birds' plumage. The preacher hesitated; when it came again, he stirred. Women's heads, under the dried and disintegrated skins of the birds, turned. In the little pen

where the sleeping man had sunk, the pew-owners looked composedly ahead. But a quicker note—they could not dissemble their panic, they opened wide their eyes, the lady fanning herself hurriedly that none might think she slept in the house of God on Easter when there was so much to see and hear. But the nasal sound came again; near ones saw him now, a lone, tired man in a blue miner's shirt, grotesque, unlovely, his face burned by sun and unclean from the earth.

And now that deceit was useless, the couple with him glowered; the lady in black and lavender, indeed, quivered with it. But the priest went ponderously on. At the next snore the littlest boy of the white-robed crew tittered. And at the next, two more tittered; one could look across the sea of silks and tails of animals and dead birds' wings and tell by the expression of the devout that God, indeed, must be disturbed. The little gentleman by the sleeping man was purple even without the splendid light from a memorial window across his face, the great artistry in the wall showing to all the thousands of the temple that the dead man whose name was written thereon must have had much money.

An usher was approaching. He bent, and the rotund woman spoke to him, the golden Book of Prayer trembling with wrath in her hand. The usher bent again and touched the sleeper's arm. The preacher in his ornate box went on unwinkingly, superior to the trouble down in the cauldron of

milliners' stuffs below him. He was preaching of the Arisen, the greatness of God's love that could look benignly down, undoubtedly, and forgive a tired and hunted man . . . besides it was getting late and he must hurry through to dine.

"Here—here—" the usher whispered, shaking the snorer, who would not have awakened through twenty hours of such puling remonstrance. A choir boy laughed; the preacher hoisted his warm collar. The usher whispered again, appealingly: "Here—mustn't sleep in church—wake—up!"

He did not, and the little man beyond reached from his side and gave the tired man such a punch that his hat fell from his lap. And at that he did awake, whirling to his feet and about with such precise and deadly action that the usher dashed against the other pew. The man stood, his hand back to his pocket. He stared dazedly.

"Here, you!" pleaded the usher, recovering. "Come out of here!"

He held out the hat. The gray burned face before him swept him and the others, the hostile faces all about, and then, taking the hat, he followed the usher up the aisle. They stared at him, forgetting God, and even their new clothes, in fright at his bloodshot eyes, his heavy face. But when he had gone quite out in a pathetic, stilled obedience for so big a man, they smiled in amused triumph, all those of the perfumes concealing the smell of beasts' skins and birds' wings—at Sunday dinner they

would laugh over it, the tired man taken from the house of God; they would dine; and then, cropful, benign, the wings and tails of the dead birds laid carefully away, with loosened waistbands and corsets, they could sleep the afternoon, or drive or talk, going about the pleasurable matter of just living.

The man stood blinded in the smite of the sun on the temple steps. Then slowly he went, his drowsed brain crackling into its need of fear. Down the street's end with its splash and glitter of blue lake, near the end of the carriage line and lolling coachmen, he saw a policeman. He was sauntering slowly toward the church. And on him with the old, fierce thrill of the hunted the lone man looked. Slowly from the base of the Greek cross he backed, watching the other, then with his curious agile tread, went the other way along the line of carriages. He kept very close to the curb; he was passing one of the smartest of the equipages, when he stopped abruptly. His eyes were fixed within to the cool semi-gloom of the cushions. A woman was watching him with eyes in terror. He himself exclaimed. The drowsy driver did not notice; the fugitive looked again at her, her eyes wide, her hand raised, her stifled cry—he glanced down the clean curb at the nearing patrolman, then, with his hand over the carriage window, he sprang the trap and slid within.

"Yes," he said intently, to her complete recognition, "have him drive on, will you?"

"Rand!" Her voice came low, with a choke. He

felt her limbs draw from his own on the cushions. "Rand!" she whispered.

He nodded. In the pause they heard the coachman stir. Staring at the intruder the woman said, clearly: "Terance—home—the Park Drive." Then she turned, whispering, her hand up, to clear, as it were, his image from her eyes: "Herford—you've come!"

His burned face had now a complacent cunning—like a man who had just won a game by some astounding trick incredible to the onlookers.

"Eh?—you? Demetra," he went on—"and after fourteen years you knew me!" He laughed and looked out—the vehicle had turned, and he saw the patrolman loitering by the shadow of the Gothic tower athwart the street. "I went to sleep—and they chucked me out. I had a notion to arise and preach them truth—to juggle the jewel and toss it before their eyes, to make them gape and yelp with wonder—and I fell asleep and must have snored."

"You—" she whispered still, in her shock—"that's like you, Rand—you've not changed. Nothing!"

"A trifle fat," he retorted. "Eh—the pity! I detest fat and here my bands have hounded me these three years." And then he sat forward, his sleepy grimace at her: "But you—here in Chicago? And in this rig? Eh? It is astonishing. I come skulking along like a hunted dog—and God knows if there was ever a man who hated to walk on tiptoes and go hushed, it is I—I slip along, dodging the police, and I

come on you. At once I open the door of your carriage—I step in—I take off my hat, so. I inquire as to your health—I am whirled off—Eh? Where? To what? It is something of a marvel."

"It's like you," she breathed—"like you." She sat back, her dark eyes relaxing, her full lips less in quiver. She was a woman of at least thirty. She had an admirable grooming befitting her dominant personality. Her accent was a trifle incisive—you would have called her foreign, yet with a doubt as to placing her. She had about her light hair, brown eyes, her face of resolution and calm acceptance, something of the array of September, a luxurious and golden fruition. That was about her—the richness and the color of a September valley.

His big priest's face watched her; she noted now its years marks, a cruelly hard stamp of wind and sun. He was forty; he looked it despite his outdoor agility, his use of limb and alert eye. His voice had a marvel in it—an inimitable wealth of modulation, mockery, appeal, power, humor, cruelty—there was a beautiful and irresistible quality in it belying his unstirred face, his settled form. Not seeing him, it would have evoked in you romance, the lure of adventure, youth,—its tone, interpretative as a violin, had the reserve of a cello.

"I see you remember?" he went on—"but I did not expect you to forget."

"Forget?" Her eyes dreamed; she was watching the flash of the lake beyond the Lincoln Park shores.

"Here—now—" she muttered—"you're back, here, where I've found peace."

"I should think you had found more," he retorted. "A little Polish girl whom I first saw on the streets with some peasant dancers. Eh?—you were starved and whipped—an old thief of a Lithuanian had you. And I bought you—I gave old Jurak fifty dollars for you, and led you home and gave you a bath. And how you scratched me!" In some good-humored reverie he did not see her paling face. "I put you to school in London. Eight years of it—I gave you a name—Demetra! And in the end you ruined me; and here you are, rigged like an empress. It's a marvel!"

"Rand," she answered slowly, "I did not know—I never knew the truth for years—that here in America they charged you, a minister, with supporting a girl abroad, hidden. And you did not explain—did nothing except defy them, and renounce your faith. Yes, you bought me—I know. For what, God, perhaps, can tell—bought me, just as a dog."

"Eh, well," he returned lightly. "I am given to experiments. I've knocked over most of the world—I know what it is to shiver all night in the rain and be hungry. Three weeks ago I killed a man in Colorado—a guard at the bull pen. I was ahead and had our only gun. He lay crumpled in the grass, and I went and sat down beside him—and it was a ticklish moment, too. But I'd killed him, and there was a quality to the thing. I thought he'd have something

to say out of the ordinary—a man dying, to the man who'd killed him. You know I'm ever attuned to the unusual—that I'm for ever seeking the complete and distinctive. But I was disappointed—this fellow merely lay and gurgled and did not recognize me. He missed a marvelous opportunity. When I come to the end you'll hear me sum up the thing aright. Death is an infamous device at best, and most of us contrive to make it commonplace. To hang a man when the bright earth is here for him —to eat and drink and go about, to stand upright and smell the good air! I will never be put out of this without a quarrel—I would wrangle it through six Heavens, but what they'd hear me protest."

She listened calmly, but with a pretense of weariness, as if she had heard much of this before—he, leaning, his *poseur's* assumption, his unstirred face with merely a suggestion of a grin, his cool eyes, and the fascination of his voice's range. "You killed a man," she said, "and in the labor wars in Colorado? That's strange, a striker, a union man—a laborer for their cause—you, of all men on earth—mad with your individualism—the prince of egoists!"

She was idly thinking what she had read of the Cripple Creek strikes, the anarchy of a state, the constitution overturned, the rule of the bullet, the bull pen and the dollar. She grasped dimly that in this brawl of the West the inordinate and defying spirit of America was apotheosized; to the Bull Hill war had come the thousands of adventurers of all the

lands, joining with the Miners' Federation or with the Owners' League—hardy men, all, masterful, alert, taking nothing for granted, not used to defeat. In this seething cauldron bubbled the most modern and coherent socialistic cult along with the untrammeled individualism of the New World. She knew vaguely of working-men shot, driven from their homes, exiled from their state under threat of death; and in turn of rich men assassinated, troops dynamited. She saw now the man by her side, as if he limned out for her, the foreign woman, vast battling forms, universal and eternal spirits struggling, the ancient law and the new, ever the same, the fighting uplift of the race here in this wonderful, infinite America.

"That's like you, too—the son of a rich man—a justice of the Supreme Court—a striker, hunted down. Like you to throw yourself into some quarrel for which you cared nothing. I remember once abroad, when you were spending your mother's money, they called you the Mad American. One wonders now what's in you?"

"To whip the beast," he answered, "this brute America they boast about—to watch it turn and snarl—to prick the dull soul in it until it shakes with rage. I even enjoy the sensation of being hunted by their police—it gives one a moment worth living. I tell you I could be a prophet for the land if they'd let me—the poet of its epic."

She looked a moment in wonder, then relaxed.

"That's like you, again—one of your old impossible speeches. I remember when a child, being terrified, but even then I began to understand that you loved to say something extravagant, to find distinctive phrases." She went on slowly—"Those days when you were interested—brought life to me. I've wondered if you were changed."

"Changed? The world has put a stomach on me—the pity of it. And I am forty. That, too, is an outrage, that a man should grow old." He leaned nearer, his inimitable grimace upon her. "A trifle tired and fat—there are no adventures for a fat man. And here I am in Chicago after years! Eh, but I've lived. I've been bucko mate on a trader to the Marquesas, and had her rotten timbers sink beneath me; I've mined in Queensland and down the Peruvian coast; I've smuggled opium into the French islands and done time marooned on a reef for it; I've slept and ate and fought with every race that fronts the Pacific, and here I am, hotfooting through Chicago's streets after the Bull Hill war—tired, getting fat—there's no bloom on the peach for a fat man. I think I'll go present myself at the judge's door, hat in hand, and ask lodging for the night. He turned me away, but he's rich and I want it—I want money, power, comfort—I want all this barbaric essence. I've starved and been hunted; I've sung my songs and, well—now I want this brute thing, wealth—money, it's power."

"Ah, you," she cried, in a sort of terror; "will

nothing ever change you?" She stared out the window at the gray flit of shadows from the blocks of closely built houses. They had turned from the park ways, crossing North State Street with its air of decorous largeness, North Clark with its intermittent shops and lodgings, to a clean and nondescript street, the horses traveling noiselessly on the asphalt, the trees flitting by. From her study of the Sunday's clean morning aspect, she presently shifted her gaze to him: "You, the actor—the *poseur,* always!"

"Let me be it then," he retorted; "you—there was always a thing in you for me to play on. I believe, in fact, you loved me."

"Loved you?" she echoed slowly; "I, a child—a little Polish girl whom you picked up in the street. You gave me a chance at life—you broke the shell from me—yes. But could a woman have loved you?"

Rand's taunt came to the clearness of her thought. "Eh, I made you, then—and robbed you of nothing. I thought there was some wonderful thing in you—a personality, a voice. Eh, I must have been a fool—a cub of a preacher—a raw boy sluiced into a divinity school to please some Scotch atavism in my father, pulled through Princeton and sent abroad to come back and be chucked into a sleepy church. Good God —*I!* A rich and puling youth mauled over by doctors of divinity, sent out to Europe at twenty-two—he finds a pretty child and he sends her to school to sing.

Then, when I had already begun to balk at the collar, three years later, they discover that I am paying your bills. All the old hens go to cackling and they ask me to explain. I don't choose to explain—I am already sick of the game—I tell them frankly to go to hell. I remember that day—a committee of deacons interrogating a divine, and he suddenly telling them to go to hell, and putting on his hat to walk out."

"Your father," she retorted— "you were his only son."

"I remember that, too. He cursed me off the place, and with the money my mother left I went. Eh, you recall? I flung it rather wide while it lasted." His chuckle came. "But it was worth it —to tell three Presbyterian deacons sitting in a row on the edge of their chairs—to have a callow preacher babe tell them to go to hell, and walk off. There is a nice completion about it—the episode, rounded—a perfect jewel. And we live such fragmentariness—eh? Few things ever are rounded out —we fulfill nothing, express nothing completely—and my leaving the church—see the gem I made of it? No boards of investigation, or charges preferred —merely three old dodderers sitting in a row, twirling their hats and digesting the matter in two seconds—that I told them to go to hell."

She listened to the voice, its trick of unbelief, its phrasing music—he was ever uneasy unless he was talking—the egotism that stopped at nothing:

"Well, now the Almighty and I get on admirably. I whistle back to Him from any corner He flings me to—unafraid, undefeated." He turned to her with a changed note, a patient curiosity. "But you, Demetra, the little scared animal that I warmed to life—how you're changed! What did it? I recall they said you had a voice. Did it make you what you are?"

"It failed," she answered in composure. "I had my chance—I was taken up by Moskowczki in Berlin—sang once, indeed, in Milan. But I failed."

He noted the hardening of her face. She went on evenly: "Well, it is not given to all. I changed everything. You had disappeared three years before. I was on my own resources. I came to America nine years ago—was an agent of the Austrian government investigating some emigration matters in a bureau of your Washington government—merely a clerk when I met the man I married."

He started, bent to her with his slow smile, an almost imperceptible creeping of sardonic humor over his broad face: "Married? I was thinking you must be—and well? Who is he?"

"I imagine you've heard of him. Doctor Ennisley of Northlake University—the chair of sociology. That was the way I met him. He came to Washington—a member of the first child labor commission. We met when I was detailed to look up statistics of emigration for him from southern Europe."

He watched her, actually marveling at last.

"You," he began, "Demetra, a thing of moods and passions—married—a professor!"

"Enough," she went on coldly. "I am married, you see."

He grinned with an odd implication of common thought, an unguessed reserve of power, cynically hazarded if he wished, to play upon the deeps within her, to find potentialities of rebellion, to outrage her with ruthless analysis. She went on composedly, measuring herself against his searching. "And I'll tell you a strange thing. I came West with my husband and found here, in Chicago, that his patron, the man through whom he hopes to do wonderful things for the reform of child labor conditions in the mills South, the one whose fortune and influence has made my husband's work possible, is Justice Stephen Rand of the state supreme court—your father."

The renegade stirred.

"We are living there—it is at the justice's request—your old home on La Salle Avenue."

He laughed. "This—my dear lady—is extraordinary! And you pick me up hounded through Chicago's streets! Eh, I always insisted that nothing more interesting than to live and feel and go about could come to a man. I am always impatient to crack open to-morrow to see what's in it."

"Your father," she paid no heed to his garrulous shift and play, "has been aging the last year. He has been a recluse for many years, save on his busi-

ness to the capital. It is a strange house—it seems haunted at times. I—" she hesitated, and went firmly on— "have felt it. I wanted to move, but the judge wished us to reside in the north wing—I think he is lonely. He rather fancies me."

The son fixed her with his shrewd gray eyes. "And you—the woman who figured in the story that made him damn me—he does not dream? Look here—" he broke in suddenly— "your husband? Did you ever tell him all?"

"Yes. But not the *man*. He knows the circumstance. He is something of a dreamer—an idealist in some things—a tolerance as broad as all this land. He knows some man lifted me—a child of Polish peasants—that through him I grasped at life —lifted myself from—the brute." She shivered curiously in a large luxuriance. "I went South with him once to the cotton mills your father owns and which Doctor Ennisley is trying to use as an experiment of his reforms. I saw the immigrants pouring in there—alien, ignorant, degraded—to be crushed by the mills, by this America which they thought meant life, hope—all that the old world had denied them, the beaten people. And, Herford, I thought of you. I shuddered. I closed my eyes and turned away. It was you who saved me from something of that kind—the sweat-shops, mills, the peasant women in the fields—yes, you—it was you gave me my life!"

He was mute at the feeling in her voice; then he

said: "And you—a foreign woman, what has the New World meant to you?"

"I have told you. Peace—rest after the fight. The love of a good man—a place in life."

"Have you children?"

"No. We've been married three years. He has a child by his first wife who, it seems, was a country girl from Iowa—a scared little thing. My husband is a fanatic about some things—the coming of the races to America is one. He dreams of a great new type—the fusing of the blood of all the peoples—you should hear him talk of it."

"He married you," the man went on, "to make that clear. He saw you a beautiful animal—a woman of the people—he saw in you a mother for his new America."

She looked attentively at him. He went on, throwing back his head to watch her calm face: "I have a magician's crystal." He raised his upper lip in that sardonic suggestion of a smile. "I hold bits of the world to the light and look at them through it. It is astonishing—I call it truth. And here you are—clean as a cat by a fire. Large-bodied, comfortable, much pleased with the beauty you have carried past thirty. You are a trifle stout, your neck a bit full—no matter—it lends to the peculiar panther luxuriance you carry. Clean as a cat, luxuriantly content, voluptuously healthy, able, easy, rounded, unstirred—and once, a child, I thought I saw in you—"

He broke off; he was staring without.

"Yes?" she went on with a smile— "Indeed?"

"No matter. There are some things my crystal seems not to make clear. I rub the glass and wonder—it is the things denied that interest one. Well, I can't blame you—to seize the good about you and lie back cropful, content. Life cuts you women cruelly sometimes. You have, indeed, to be cats, to fight back wildly, piteously ineffective. No, I can't blame you—you women—to be full and by a fire is better than lean, shawled, ugly before your time. I know. I have been a tramp on the road—I know the long way. I've seen the under side. I've been worked in a chain-gang along with a nigger in Brazil and had the blood drop off my fingers into the stuff they gave us to eat at night. In this country I once tramped through the South and I worked at Rand's mills."

She turned on him in horror: "You—your father's mills!"

"Rolled cotton bales in the mill yard. I was there ten days. I can remember the red clay road to the shanties, the dust whirling along the gaunt brick walls when nigger carts went by, and the little beasts pouring out from the weave rooms. Eh, and I've seen their rat faces dumb, thin, turned at me—"

"Good God!" she cried, "be still!"

"Eh? I remember once, His Honor, the Justice, wished me to come to take charge of his interests in the South, for an absentee landlord is never quite

sure. Yes, he would have forgiven me once if I'd have come back to help break little animals in his cotton mills." He turned to her with an outthrust of his unshaven chin: "I recall now that once I read a magazine article written by Corbett Ennisley on Rand's mills—the child workers, the mill-town shanties. It was touchingly pictured and had a fervent peroration about the brotherhood of men. Here, this man you married—what road has he come to learn his wisdom?"

"He has given his life work to it—he is known as an authority."

"A line of ghosts from the loom rooms to the shanties—from the shanties to the looms. Eight hundred, always, night and day—and the great wheels whirring—always whirring—the black smoke drifting across the sky. The red dust of the roadside and the stink along the unshaded lanes —eh, this college preacher of a brotherhood—has this ever bitten his soul?"

She studied him in silence, his deep voice ceasing. She tried to go back the years, to remember him, a fresh-eyed, buoyant clergyman, too full, too ardent, too eager for life's filling of the cup. She saw now the unwieldy figure, the heavy face, the mocker's lips —his rough blue shirt unbuttoned at the throat, a stain of earth across the bronzed flesh. She remembered his trick of phrasing, the poetizing with which he ever used to clothe his speech. She was trying to visualize again a child's dream.

In the pause the carriage stopped by a gate along which was a high iron fence grotesque and old on a coping. From it ran a walk of blue and yellow ancient tiles on either side of which was a sward severely plain. Rand's house set in this with the bulk of a dock, a look of waiting, crouched, bulldog stubborn, the windows staring, unwinking, sinister. Banked by the respectable boarding-houses of small managers, higher clerks, students and the like, each with its flight of steps to the tesselated vestibule floor and colored glass door, the judge's home lingered on from a pretentious era of the seventies, the only detached house along the decent stretch of asphalt; its lawn and walk, the stone dog in the front, its roofs and porticoes lending the air of a dirty gem, but real, to a cheap ring. And west from La Salle Avenue the sloven town shuffled off to the sodden manner of the poor. The avenue had none of Chicago's glut and battle; with its young elms and marginal green, and three decent church spires against the dun-streaked sky it was tamely enough arrayed.

But Rand's house, beyond its black and rusty fence, in its forlorn distinction, heeded nothing—you would have picked it as, in fact it was, the refuge of a recluse, a broken spirit. When the carriage stopped, the wife turned in intent study of the son.

"Rand," she whispered, "I had forgotten. I have brought you here—did you wish it—do you want to go in?"

"Wish it? Who has a better right? It's mine."

"Your father—" she looked at him incredulously, "do you dare?"

He had opened the door and was out before the coachman could descend. The man looked at him amazed, the rough blue shirt collar upturned above his miner's coat. Demetra Ennisley followed; she looked about at the vacant street, the silent house, the level, ancient sward, young green in April, all under the astonishing brilliance of the sun. "Drive back to the church," she said to Terance. "Bring Mrs. Ennisley—I could not wait for her. The service should be out by twelve at most."

The old man nodded, gathering his lines, still looking amazedly at his hitherto unseen passenger. He turned the vehicle and was off on the smooth way.

The woman said: "You've killed a man, and your father is justice of the supreme court. You see this, don't you? Hadn't you better devise some other meeting—a reconciliation—"

He checked her patiently: "Did you think I'd come home to whine and beg? I'm a better man than he or his kind. I am more just, kind, true. I have, my dear lady, held myself up to the magician's globe and looked through." And then his composure dropped to the opening note: "And I'm home, tired of the road, the station houses, the dirty blankets they give you, and the grub. I'm not afraid to face him. Money, I want it—it's power. I want

to fight as my class can fight. I've seen the other side—I know the beaten people."

Her calm belied her, she seemed considering some other matter with patient and simple sincerity.

"If you're here, my life is in your hands, I suppose. You can wreck it—everything. And you gave me my chance at everything—you kept me like a brother would. I couldn't understand; I was a child, dreaming. Now, one wonders what you'll do."

He looked down at her from the step in an ascetic humor. "One wonders what's in you worth saving. See here—" the big form on its agile legs came nearer, he stooped in a sudden cunning to watch her face—"once you loved me—whatever that is."

He stepped nearer: "See here—answer me."

"Yes," she answered simply. "A child."

He reflected upon it with the air of a schoolmaster. "Undoubtedly I could bring it back if I desired. Eh? It might be an experiment of some interest if time hung heavy here." Then he turned with his inconsequential humor: "Come on in the house. Let's hunt up that old turkey, the justice, and ruffle him by a sight of the prodigal returned. Watch him gabble when he sees me!"

"Rand," the wife retorted, "are you mad?"

"I," he said airily, "am the one person in the world who acts on pure reason. I am the lone follower of truth."

With a strange patience she followed to the house.

CHAPTER II

THE woman paused again at the vestibule. The April sky had a threat of cloud.

"There's much you don't know," she began with a show of indifference. "It's a poor time at best for your return. There's a strike in the Alabama mills. Mr. Ennisley has just returned from a conference with the mill owners trying to win some concession for the operatives. And your father is greatly worried—he's been much harrassed—there's a fear of violence. And you?" She went on seriously as one giving disinterested and grave counsel, "Your swagger—bitterness—your inconceivable way of stirring hatred."

"Let the fools fight it out—it's none of my affair. Here I am home—hungry—run down by the police. When a man's hungry what does he care for some claptrap of profit in a cotton mill? If a man's hungry, feed him—if he's cold, warm him—if these little rats in the mills are crying out for something, give it them. Who are we to say another shall go hungry or wear rags and crawl about any sort of master?"

She evaded him; she went on indifferently:

"You've hated the mills; my husband has fought to raise them—given his life to them. He's endangered his position at the university to plead for the child labor laws—his radical speeches and attacks on the industrial system."

"A good man mewling about among the politicians and the money-makers for the right to live. Has he ever slept in a station house with a rag of a quilt over him and his brother man and gone out the next day tramping the road?"

She checked some revolt and went on: "Doctor Ennisley has fought big odds—the mill owners, the newspapers, the courts. He was about to get a hundred thousand dollars from Judge Rand to build a training school for the child operatives—a great experiment—when this strike came on. This very week is the crisis of all he's hoped for!"

The son laughed; he had opened the door and pushed through unwelcomed to the dark hall. "The old man giving money to his beggars? Good God, what's happened? I think it has been you—you know men well. You used to have a way of getting things from them."

With no word she followed. She wondered at herself, subdued before him, she with her seeming dominance, irradiating to others her completeness. She had told herself years ago that she had forgotten—that now it was nothing that once, a child of sixteen in a London private school, she had cried night long because this man had left her with a

mere shake of the hand, uncaring that her cheeks burned, that she could not still her heart-beats in his presence. He had given much and asked nothing; she had indeed, when the world disclosed its ways in her later life, marveled what manner of man he was. Now he was back, the enigma still.

Within the gloom of the hall an old serving-man was staring at the new-comer; a cry quavered from him.

"Bullock, you're still alive. I recall that you closed this door on me when I left—the same gargoyle's head on you as now. I suppose if I should come a hundred years from now they'd have it stuffed and mounted in the hall to scare me off. You hated me."

He turned and went down the high long hall with its two oil portraits dim on a cheerless wall. At the library door he looked back to see the old servant with shaking hands on the inlaid brass monsters of the door-knob. In the closing the grotesque sleeping shapes flashed; he remembered how, in his boyish loneliness in this house, he had always associated their judging evil with the door man's skinny, blotched fingers—they had jeered at youth. He looked about the dark library; in these same reflecting oaken and glass panels he had seen his boy's face give back the dread of the silent room. Now a man's face was staring here, his youth done, flung away as found, idle treasure. The place rebuked him. From a gilt, ancient frame the portrait of his

dead brother, Donald, watched him as of old; his mother's, farther away across the long table, peered at him, the canvas presentment with the pallor of the coffined. The cases with their heavy volumes, the cold prisms of the chandeliers of pendant crystals—now as always, the house judged him and despised.

He turned from his mute study to stir the low fire; to find the wife looking at him from the door.

"And you," he said, "live here? I'd as lief be in a tomb—"

"Be still," she answered; "your father is here."

Rand awaited the footfall on the berugged floor of the hall. His father came from the shadow. He must have seen the other from above; he had no word, no gesture—an old man, frail of form, a grim, smooth-shaven pallor, a judicial strength, a sort of nobleness that made the expectant disdain of his face a cruel thing to see. They looked across the room at each other, father and son, the blood in each seemed dead. They had corrupted each the other from an apex of hate long passed; the renegade preacher of the Word had destroyed the elder's faith in it—through the years he had hardened to the world. The justice had come to be an automaton of the law's expression; he symbolized the impassive majesty, the terror of its spiritual hereditament. To expect from his lips other than the pitiless exactness, the penetration of justice, as the soul of man could find it, was to expect that

"On whose welcome have you come?"

coming to storm—and something to eat, because I'm hungry. My belly calls, and so would yours if you'd knocked about for fifteen hundred miles on freight sidings and train yards, looking this way and that, like a hunted wolf."

"As you wish," the old man's voice was courteously uncurious, "I am not concerned with your comings or goings. There is food for you."

Rand watched him go. After the pause he followed Mrs. Ennisley to the dining-room, where she touched a button, summoning a maid. The stranger looked about at the servant with his detached smile. "A decent-looking girl. That's strange in this house—there was always a staff of mummies here—there was something that grew them old and yellowed." He sat down and drew the slouch hat from his broad forehead: "Eh—well! Let's eat and drink and be done with it. I thought he'd at least take me in. The wind's up—it'll be a damned rough night, and I don't care who feeds me—one man or the other." He made an impatient gesture to the maid who stood staring at his blue shirt, the collar upturned: "Now bring meat and bread—bring stuff that gives a man action—it's a damned cold night I'll go back to."

Demetra watched him presently as he drank hungrily, with no note of her. Gross, absorbed, with animal intent, he ate. But after a while he looked up, the first keen hurt satisfied, and seeing her eyes on him across the table, laughed: "This is

an adventure for you. I kill a man in Colorado because they'd bull-penned me—I beat a way to Chicago and a man who used to know me in Sonora, now a watchman in the yards, tips me off to the police. I dodge them forty hours and am driven into a carriage to meet—Demetra—and home, to sit here at the old man's board—at his meat and wine. O, the devil! Never tell me that the game's not worth while! Who's lived as I've lived?"

He rose and went to the long windows looking at the naked ivy clinging to the wall of the house across the sward, a sheer, windowless wall of this decadent street, where Rand's house sat sullen in a world of clerklings' rooming-places. He looked back then, at her; his restless eyes lit.

"His Honor—he whom they proclaim the just and great—tell me something of him."

"I think, beneath it all, there are times when he wishes to forgive you."

"Forgive me? Eh, for what? For being the happier man? This one they set up in a silk robe to judge his betters—he forgive me? Who's the man of us two—I with never a moment in twelve years when I could not swing everything I owned on my back and set off on the road with it, or this old man squatted here croaking law for others and coining flesh into money at his mills? What's his tribe to me? I have been beyond all that."

"That is like you—your old wild talk." She watched him with slow absorption that her show

of indifference could not hide. "Here you have come back—where I've found peace."

"Peace? A cat's peace by the fire." He came to her as she sat by the white cloth, leaned to her, his marvel of a voice low: "See here—they'll ask you where you picked me up—you will have to say I stopped you at the gate, or something like that. Naturally, you dare not admit you ever knew me."

"No."

"I thought as much. Well, lie then, as suits you. I hate a lie, but now and then the fashion of your tribe is to be followed. To eat when one's hungry, and drink, and draw out of the storm when it wets one—to stand upright and feel strong in the sun, fearing nothing—to love and hate—but simply, as truth is—Good Lord, it's simple, but how hard to live among you with it!"

"That's like you," she repeated, "I heard all this before—bewildered by it then—now—"

"What, then?"

"Who could understand? Truth? I think you are an empty bottle with the wind whistling through it. I think—" she muttered, staring at him, her voice now swift, smiting, "you yourself are the most incredible falsehood!"

He bent lower, his complacent cunning on her, his sure voice about her as a net: "And this—Demetra! When I saw you a child, I thought there was a wonderful thing in you, the thing that might have made me a poet—I wrote verses then—do you

remember? God knows I do it yet sometimes in the back rooms of working-men's saloons or along the open road! Yes, sometimes I've loved a thing and carried it until it was worn out—and then threw the bit of paper in the air, to the ground, and let it rot. The best things are not printed nor painted nor sung."

"Ah, you—" she cried, "I remember!"

"Well, here we are. You have come to be common enough—and I thought I saw in you the wonderful comrade—light and joy and soul. I could stand in delight and watch a miracle. Eh, well—here we are. Can you see a sort of boy's face lit with all that in *this, now*—a gambler's bullet under my jaw, a dirty shirt, fat, well on the way? You have come to be common enough—yourself, a trifle fat—and more than thirty. Eh, let me tell you something—keep your good looks as long as you can. A pretty woman is infinitely more interesting than a plain one. The ugly sister falls back, she accepts, deprecatingly—she tries to please with a dilettante false offering to life, to defy a cruelty of nature. She can not come to us with a challenge; the mission of beauty is its sex appeal. Nature, the old devil, knew what she was about, but you'd better assist her all you can. Can't you contrive to keep from being fat?"

"I am content." She had listened to his garrulity; always he had loved to talk, silence a thing not to be endured. He was ever pricking the bubble and blow-

ing the next—but she wondered now at her acceptance. "I've married a good man—I'm helping him. I'm contented."

"Yes, as women are. A round of getting up, rubbing the sleep from your eyes, at breakfast in a wrapper while the good man reads his paper. Then a call or shopping or about the house, and to bed at night—snug, warm, cared for like a cow, clean as a cat by a fire. Content—as women are."

"What have you done with life? A tramp here at your father's table? Home after the wreck of it all? Your mother's fortune thrown to the wind? Hating law, society—incomprehensible? I think I understand much that used to bewilder me—the old days when I think you loved me."

"The old days—when I said I did."

She stirred; she laughed slightly; she drew, before his watching, her sensuousness: "Tell me," she said, "what was I to you?"

"A harp—I thought some day I'd carry you about to play on. But I tired of you—I was right. Now, you're common enough."

"Yes?" Her stealth taunted him.

"You women, all of you, are eaten with an itch—money, place, to have the eyes of men follow you, to love."

"Is that a crime, then?"

"That's all you live for—that is the secret of all your heroisms. A woman will grind her fingers off for love, but the greater thing—that is beyond her."

"The greater thing?" she leaned to him, her show of complacence stirred: "What's that?"

"A thing men know. To go out in the dark together—a hand to a comrade—asking nothing. To love without gift, without profit, without passion."

She was stilled, then asked curiously: "And no woman does this?"

"For love you will give all. That is your temple—that is where you stop and dwell. But to give all and ask nothing—the greater thing is beyond you."

The wife rose and went to look from the window at the gray spring clouds massing above the lake. She came back presently, changed, a smiling, eager mood, as one ready to play an intimate, friendly game.

"Tell me, Herford, am I changed? Am I the little ignorant Polish girl whom you picked up to send to school, to learn gentle ways, to prove herself, to live and be all—all?"

He looked over the September ripeness of her body, her indolent smile conscious, full, daring with power in the game.

"Changed much! You were then a thing of dreams—a suggestion of driving power in you—a dramatic dominance to come."

She shrugged her shoulders.

"I remember so little. I have tried to forget, but I owe you much. A girl in a Galician village—I remember the hideous wooden shoes the women

wore to the fields—the toad-like figures of the women—" she checked herself, drawing a sharp breath. "The other day, on Wabash Avenue, I saw a picture of Millet's. I went into the shop and asked to see the print and I took it to the front again and tore it up, threw it in the street. And I went out without paying for it—I hated to remember. Ah, well!" He had listened with acute attention. "I suppose I would be that—or worse—if you'd not given me a chance at life. Sometimes I think of Poland—my little brothers and sisters—Joseph, Stanislaus, little Marta—Ludovic. I have almost forgotten the tongue! And then, after you came and went, I got on, some way—I had a driving power as you say. And no matter, now—this is the new world and a woman must find her life—live, love. I'm happy."

"No."

"Yes."

"No." He leaned to her, and laughed, a satiric melody.

"Yes," she repeated steadily. "I accept. I think of nothing, regret nothing. A woman can go to the devil in spite of all the good in her; and a man can save himself in spite of all his evil—that's our piteous disadvantage. You said we had to fight back as cats fight—we do. But I've found my place. A woman can make wonderful compromises with life—she has to do it."

"A mollusk—clinging to a rock. Common

enough—bought with a ring and some women's stuff—contented. That's a woman's compromise, yes."

"Well, I'm the wife, now—the American wife—contented. And you, Rand, always the *poseur*, filled with magnificent vanities. What have you given? You've loved nothing, helped nothing. There's not a soul that cares whether you live or die."

Across the table in the stillness he watched her. Then, abruptly, he rose. "Where's my hat?"

"On the floor where you laid it. You're going?"

He looked down from under the range-beaten brim, the shadow of a grimace on his priest's mouth. "Yes."

She glanced to the window: "It's raining now—it's beginning to storm."

"I want the storm. It's honest."

The wife watched him upturning the collar of his rough coat. He slipped the blue automatic pistol from one pocket to the other to ease its pressure on his leg.

She came nearer and said clearly: "You've killed a man. If you go on the street you may be caught. That would be a bad thing—you, son of Stephen Rand, of the supreme court."

He laughed now loudly: "And is that of what you were thinking? And your fat berth by the fire—your husband—your tabby content—you'd not like it endangered by me, eh? That's your solicitude?"

She looked steadily at him; she felt in command: "I've come through much. I've made my place. I'm the wife now—the American wife."

He noted curiously the incisive foreign accent of her perfect English; she had indeed nothing to recall another life than this and her odd oriency, her Byzantine maturity, rich, complete, a cosmopolite.

"Eh?" He gave a grudging banter of admiration: "And I worked the miracle of you? You'd be a peasant in the fields, or, if you'd come to America, a slattern immigrant woman in some sweat-shop, or a miner's wife in some Slav coal town in Pennsylvania, or an ill-smelling girl of the weave rooms in Rand's mills in northern Alabama. Good God—and you overbear me with the imperious will of a line of emperors! I was the juggler of fate, eh? I was a wonder-worker who held you up to his crystal, shook the ball till it dazzled—and at once—see—the American wife, rich, a Sybarite, the air of an empress!"

His young-old face dropped its mask; he had the pleasure, one would have guessed, of a maker of intricate and beautiful toys, or a collector of curios, in finding for his pains an exquisite and unexpected virtu.

"Eh, well!" he went on, "it is a good rôle—the juggler. It is simple, too. When I'm happy, I sing; when I'm sad, I weep; when the rain wets me, I shiver; and when men wrong me, I curse. And when I find a flower by me, I look into its heart. I

would write the poem greater than the *Iliad,* only it would be fool's work to put it on paper. It would be common enough to put the blaze and marvel of life between cardboards."

She listened in odd patience. He went on, disregarding her, through the dim hall and out into the windy afternoon. Once she cried to him, but he did not seem to hear. She saw him go down the old walk between the plain grass spaces, open the heavy black gate and step to the pavement.

Without the coping Rand came upon a little old man trying to force a huge umbrella into the wind which was flicking the first drops of rain out of the east. The old man looked up; he broke to glad surprise.

"Herford—man! *They* said ye'd come! *Home*—lad!"

"And going again. Brother John—you old croaker—not a line changed!"

John Bride laughed; he cleared his long white underbeard from his red chops; his cheek smooth, clear as a girl's. His fair eyes twinkled.

"Hearty, lad, as when I dandled ye in the old east room of a Sunday visit. D'ye mind? More than thirty years—four and thirty—six and thirty—Hoo! It's good to see ye!"

"You dine here to-day, I take it."

"Every Sunday and every Thursday night for billiards wi' Stephen. We have no missed it a week since sixty-two unless he was wi'oot the city."

"You have queer taste, John Bride—to dine here. But you had a soul in you—you stood between me and many a bad break when I was a cub—when they were trying to hammer divinity into me. And I was fool enough to let them."

Brother John laughed softly, fighting on with his cotton umbrella.

"Boy, where awa'? Ye must have jist come."

"I don't know. It's a little matter."

"Ye'r leaving this dour day? See here—wouldn't Stephie see ye?"

"Stephie and I can see more than we desire in less time than this."

John laughed again, his soft ringing chuckle.

"There was never much need of speech atween ye. Come on, man. Walk a bit—it'll start the blood and then we'll have a bit of Scotch when we get home. Ye can smell the smoke o' the peat in it."

But at the corner the younger man stopped: "There are reasons why you'd better not."

"Hoo, man! Ye'r Stephen's first-born and ye'r blood o' mine. I canna see a cousin's youngster put off so."

Rand watched him narrowly. "You—what's in you? I'm not the lad I was—nor the man either."

"I never was scared off by ye'r daft talk. No honest man's afeard o' ye."

They went on from the precise bareness of La Salle Avenue, westward across the hushed Sunday traffic of meaner streets, leading on to the tene-

ments and dreary walls of warehouses under the somber clouds.

"Look here—" Rand had grown alert, his eyes keen on each passer-by, and warily intent on a policeman on a passing car— "where are we going?"

"A bit on. By the railroad a block from the big new school."

"You live in this sort of place?"

"On a bit. They're most foreigners. Ye see the block beyond? I built it—a grand property, housin' forty families. Man, they're all sorts there—Jews, Irish, Swedish women, Italians and south of Europe folk. It's a babel on rent day. And wi' the toddlers pourin' out o' the big new school twice each day—it's a fearsome crossin' wi' sixty trains a day. I'm flagman there."

Rand stopped him: "Brother John, have you lost your money?"

"Lord love ye, I was never richer. That grand property—housin' forty families—I built it. It's my idea for the men in the gas houses and the yards beyond. I rooted out the worst rookery in the city this side the river to put it up."

They had come across from the red brick, three-story apartment building stretching the entire block from a dingy saloon corner to where the railroad blocked the other end. There were six entrances up flights of bare, well-kept stairs and above bulging bays caught the sunshine from the dirty air. Across from it a gaunt warehouse wall rose. The big new

school-house was beyond the railroad crossing, where it stood sharply against the wilderness of tenements, of blackened small factories and the gas tanks red, slurred in the failing afternoon.

"See here;" Rand asked again, "you said you were flagman? I remember that you helped build that road. When I was at Lake Park Academy you were, I think, on the board of directors, John Bride."

"No doubt. There're divideends waitin' me this quarter. I stretched legs under the vice-president's round table last week, smoking his good cigar. Eh, what are ye starin' at?"

"That you're some sort of fool yet. You flag the crossing?"

"Four years ago the St. Paul Limited ran down six youngsters on this crossin' on their way from the big school. They're a poor folk about and the wailin' of the foreign mothers . . . it was hard, man. I investigated it personally—I put this bit o' road through before I had the Scotch burr out o' my tongue—a braw chick of an engineer. Well, the foreign women wailin' and the men mutterin'—it was a bad crossin' and the grades are not yet where they should be. I was out o' harness, lad—old an' alone—and that's a bad thing. Eh, can ye understand? I was the first constructing engineer o' the road, the first superinteendent, man. I put it oot fra all the West—all the thousands of miles before they merged us. Can ye see? I couldn't give it up. I wanted to go in harness. And after the Limited

plowed through the bairns on their way from school I asked the board to make me flagman, as I was to live in the apartments I'd built just there. The board laughed me down. Weel, I jist went on—the superintendent of division had to appoint me. The board called me daft, but I get my forty dollars a month—a flagman."

"You sit in this box and warn people off the road—the road you hold stock in? Is that it, Brother John?"

"There's more than a man's profit—I get divideends, but there's that beyond a man's profit. It was na for that we put it oot to a' the Northwest."

"Eh?"

"There's service. The road made me, man—this mighty America made me. I came from Edinboro an immigrant in steerage, penniless as any that walks the street, comin' to find my cousin, Stephen. Ye'r line had been from Linlithgow for two hundred years, but blood is strong i' the North—we'd kept the connection. And ye'r father put me, a raw cub of a student surveyor, to railroading. That's how I came to mother this bit o' track—and beyond west, man, west! That was auld John Bride's service—drivin' it oot through snow and desert, and through forty years watchin' it grow—the road, and on it the people came pourin'—all the peoples. Lord love ye, man, I've stood by the track mony a day, the red flag in my hand with the same auld thrill—a train comes up frae the heart o' the town and roarin' off

to the West bearin' the mony peoples. I'll stand here 'til I drop, lad—in harness. I'm na useless yet wi' the flag in my hands, servin' as the road serves. There's that beyond a man's profit."

The son's eyes were on John Bride as he stood that day, a blink of the sun breaking the April clouds and lighting his reddened face, his old eyes on the right of way. There, between the dun and mighty walls of the city's commerce, under the overhanging cloud above Chicago, this gorged meeting-place, the glut of races, the crucible, ran the road, the shining rails curving to the Northwest. Spanning the land to sea, spreading to right, to left, it came, pouring the exhaustless treasure of blood, the long-pent myriads, the beaten people of the defeated races, on to the mighty making, the illimitable ages of their destiny.

In the murk above the wet cinders a far switchman had hung a red lamp. The stranger watched it as the old man cleaned his feet at the stair nearest the road's crossing.

"Come up—come up—" said John Bride.

"See here," Rand answered, "it's best you know I've killed a man."

"Come up," John Bride repeated. "It's wet, wi'oot."

"You fool," the hunted man retorted, "I killed Marty, the guard. You'd best not shelter me."

"I heard ye. . . . Come on."

At the top of the stairs the old man opened the

door to the narrow hall of a flat. They went along this passage past dark little rooms to the one that seemed a dining-room. It had a round table, chairs, a littered sideboard, all seeming cheaply pretentious, middle-classy, an attempt at woodcarvers' ornateness, suggesting the department store displays. The host lit the gas, and bustled about with his coat and rubbers. The guest sat down in silence, staring at the crude, bright tinting of the walls, a calendar the sole decoration. The single window looked on a very clean white airshaft and across this, at an obtuse angle was another facing. This window, in the blur of the rainy evening, was a patch of uncertain light, across which a shadow moved.

"You've a neighbor," said Rand—"a woman. I don't like them about. Who is she?"

"A bit of a quiet girl. A Jew girl who does typewriting for the professor at the big house."

"Ennisley?" Rand started, turning to him.

"Yes, the cracked socialist professor the papers are caterwauling about. This Louise goes there each day. She got his attention by teaching some of the children hereabout that work days. I gave her the basement and put in fifty chairs to start. It's a fine night school now, but she's gone wi' the professor to bigger work. She's a great-eyed quiet girl—I think a bit daft on reforming matters."

"It's a queer place for a woman to live alone."

"I give her the flat cheap. She can keep an eye on the class of Slavs she started, and she'd rather

be here. She comes and goes, a still pleasant body—lonely, I doubt not, except for her work. A foreign born girl—there's none aboot me but new peoples, pushin' in, eager, quarrelin'—God listen to the mony tongues of them! Hoo, this Chicago! The marvel of it. . . . Ye'r of an auld line of America, man—if there is such. Two hundred years of it and beyond that, Scotch blood till the time of Bruce and on. Ye'r line has fought every war the land saw. It built on west and west wi' the frontier. But ye'r day's done—here's the new people pourin' along the road."

The other man listened indifferently, watching the shadow on the window light across, the spatter of the rain making it a field of gold, a translucent crystal, hung now in darkness.

CHAPTER III

ENNISLEY dropped his traveling-case by the door of the rooms given to their indefinite stay in Stephen Rand's house; he turned, still in his wet light overcoat, to his wife; he kissed her and then held her off, his eyes shining with their grateful, hungry pleasure.

"Demetra! You waited for me! It's very late. The train was delayed at Grand Crossing—hours. I put in every minute, though, over the notes. How's my little Tad?—how's mother?"

She smiled back at his eager eyes going now around the warm-lit room. There was ever this pathos about the man reaching to her in his ardent fashion—to her, and to his home-spot for surcease, shelter, sympathy. His sturdy youngish figure, his fine brown-bearded face, its earnest eyes a trifle sad with the detached self-centering of the dreamer, the brow high, white, the stubborn hair—a clean boy's way of greeting one, of meeting issues openly, simply; this had been the spell he cast, this had been his success. The dreaming had bred action, he had, indeed, "come up fighting," his face had compact purpose; he was an idealist capable of fanatical

tenacity and with faiths at odd variance with the scientific quality of his mind; it was this union that made his class-room lectures of such absorbing interest to the attentive young thought of the university. He was not patient nor politic; he could be Jesuitical in his radical utterances, he could clothe them in a waspish brilliance. It was this that had pushed him to the forefront of every problem engaging him; he was superbly alive to the importance of modernity, its acute receptivity, its inspiring freedom. It seemed the day for doing, and his mind was ever pushing to extremes of sociological thought, pricking lagging conditions—he was little given to realizing his responsibilities, nor the long processes of advancement. He was, therefore, a man distrusted by representative social thinkers, and savagely assailed by the obtuse commercial hegemony of the American idea. He had truth with him and he used it to sting; it was this inability to answer on common ground that made his opponents writhe, actually to hate him, denouncing him "visionary," "unsound," "fanatical."

And his lovable personality and thought, the splendid crusading spirit of youth, cloaked his iconoclasm with a large valor; he loved his work amazingly, he delighted in its doubtful fighting issues as will the gentle soul to whom is clear the noble need of war. For seven years he had fought for the child labor reform laws with pen and tongue, importuning in lobby and committee rooms in not only half a

dozen state capitals, but at Washington. He stood, in fact, a national figure in this, because of his bitter moral visualization of that aspect of it, which appealed to every mind sharing the modern restlessness against the mere American idea, the squat, brutish commercial aggrandizement, that, in the building of the land, justified itself as business, the proper purpose of the republic.

With his coat off he turned again to clasp his wife, who yielded with a soft engaging condescension to the pleasure. Always to him, it seemed, he should cast away care with her, and in this room. "How's my boy?" he repeated. "When you wrote, Demetra, to Washington, he wasn't well. I suppose that harness chafes him—and he'll have to wear it ten months, the doctor said. Poor little Tad!"

"He has a slight cold. Ellen tucked him away early. Your mother wanted to sleep within hearing, in the nursery to-night, but I persuaded her it was not needful."

The young father's eager eyes softened. He loved the voice of this woman, who had come to take the place of Bertie's dead mother, the simple little mid-West mother as unlike this second wife, this splendid full-breasted creature with her foreign air, as the wild rose of her Iowa prairies was unlike the flare of a chrysanthemum. Ennisley's mind went back to the days with Jessie and her baby's birth—the pitiful little twisted figure which had been in braces from its second year—the days

when, with his country-bred wife, he had been a sorry, ill-fledged instructor in an inland sectarian college choking his ardent life. It seemed that he had come up wonderfully in the short years, since Jessie's death, to mate with this other woman, whose gowning stamped her indubitably as of another world.

When she came near him now, the fragrance of her hair, neck, breath, bodice struck him with its sense of her completeness. He thought of her at times, a trifle awed, giving him the feeling that he had come upon the reincarnation, as it were, of a Roman matron—though glossed with superficial modernity, she stood near the primal mothers, their latent power, their terrible nobleness. He loved her passionately, but he seemed to grasp behind this a strange duality for each of them. He looked on himself, his common and thorough American blood and breeding, as able to typify the coming man for the mightier race; a parent stock needing for its recrudescence out of the money-getting traditions encrusting the later republic, the best the simpler peoples offered, the flux of their untainted life stream flowing immemorially through peasant veins to obscure destinies. And in this foreign wife he had found the symbol for the union, she, with her origin of a common stock, risen to the highest—that was to be the glory of this new land, the mating of the races, the flowering of the best of each to all. [redacted]conception, this eugenic law, he gave him-

self with a seer's passion. Even now he dreamed she was to have a child by him within the year. It should be a son to be reared greatly, to be great, to exemplify the New American, past the gross era, the barbaric conquest and travail of the land.

He released his wife's warm hands. "Mother—it's like her—she couldn't trust the nurse or any hired service, any more than she can reconcile herself to seeing us have soup at dinner. In Iowa, none but a sick person is ever given soup!"

He laughed fondly, calling up his little mid-West mother.

The wife smiled: "She's gone to bed, worrying as usual, when you are out after nine-thirty. I drove her to the Easter service at Trinity—she was quite overcome by it all—in fact, appalled!"

He brooded a moment on his wife's unchanged placidity. Then he went on: "No, don't bother about anything to eat, dear. I had a bit on the train, and I'm too fagged to bother about more. We had a tough time at the last conference—the situation is pretty strained down there. I couldn't get much concession from the mill owners; I'll make another appeal to Judge Rand. If he'll abolish night work for the children and shorten the hours, we'll have a big point gained. If this strike hadn't come on now just when we had him—the biggest operator in the Randsville district—almost won over!"

"Louise called up," the wife said irrelevantly. "She said a lot of mail had accumulated and she

would bring it from your office if I thought you'd be home to-night. I couldn't assure her."

His face lightened: "It's like the girl—how she watches things for me! She's worked nights down in that little flat in John Bride's block compiling data so that when I write that report to the commission we can breeze through it in no time!"

His wife smiled; she was used to this enthusiasm when Louise Hergov, the secretary, was mentioned; a world of work and dreams, vital, glowing hazards and victories in which she had no comradeship, but she grudged nothing. There was a trifle of condescension in this tolerance; she had, in fact, a secret feeling that Corbett was rather swayed by this quiet secretary, a Jewish girl, whom he had found, a colorless school teacher in a tenement district, who had been a Hull House resident, and much interested in a settlement on Larrabee Street which Ennisley had founded in the days of his lesser life. It was there he met her. The foreign wife seemed to discover in him, in his enthusiasms, his impulsive mannerisms, nothing of the brilliant leadership which his name meant to the world. She had wondered at times if the last, rough attribute of the fighting man was not lacking in him. She had the cosmopolite's disdain of the proselyting spirit, of the crusading need—she looked on the man's soul with a complacent curiosity; it was a many-faceted jewel of whose splendor there was no doubt, whatever its intrinsic worth.

"And the papers—the *Manufacturers' Record*, which Louise brought here—it attacked you very bitterly, didn't it?"

He smiled indulgently at her obvious intent of sympathy, wondering if she would ever really understand. In the better light by her table where he sat, she saw a new worn and haggard look on his face. "I don't believe you've slept at all. Corbett, you're aging under all this strife you stir up constantly."

He laughed again, pulling his brown beard; his tired eyes grew merry.

"O, if a man had three heads and enough brains to fill 'em! And six pairs of stout hands—why then —I'd still want more! There's so much to do!"

"I don't suppose you ever rested in your life," she went on. "Your mother says she never saw you still for a moment."

His eyes closed, he lay back in a reverie for once: "Little mother—who couldn't find her God in a big city church on Easter! No, I suppose she was simply overwhelmed!"

He remembered the church life of his boyhood in the mid-West. The First Methodist Church standing square, white clapboarded among the young elms, the hitching rail before it in the village dust; the Wednesday evening prayer meetings, the Epworth League socials, the Sewing Circle where the ladies each year filled four boxes with cast-off but neatly repaired clothes to be sent to the families of

needy preachers off somewhere or other—his boy's imagination always pictured that and winced at it. He seemed to have begun his long knight-errantry of thought from that, a visualization of the unknown preachers' children, in pitiful, clean, proud beggary, about the annual box sent from the First M. E. Church of Iowa Center, and containing his own rejuvenated short pants and frayed blouses. He had been acute with the shame of it—there seemed need in the world of fighting men, and not a box of old clothes sent by good women, to redress the wrongs of meager children. That thought had sent him on, had been with him through his hard-won college course, his ill-paid years as an instructor at his alma mater, with his country wife and crippled child, dependent on his ability to keep his mouth shut to his growing doubts, his heresies of creed and social doctrine, the bitterness of his repression; on and on to the splendid years of freedom, of achievement; to lead the fighting line, to be the daring raider far in advance of one of the great causes.

And the little mother had come frightened along this way; from filling the mission boxes and entertaining the minister with the best of the "put-up fruit," and occasionally being invited out to drive in his rattling old surrey with his wife and babies—from this to the startling Now, when she went to a gorgeous Easter rite, dim, mysterious, inordinate, sent and called for in Justice Rand's carriage, at her side on the cushions this luxurious, foreign wife of

her successful son—it was, indeed, a miracle! And she was frightened—miracles belong properly in the Old Testament.

A step had come. Ennisley looked about. He rose with his warm boy's grasp of a little woman's hands; his mother was before him. He smothered her invariable depreciating quaver, the reticence of the mid-West pioneering woman to demonstrations of affection—he laughed delightedly, held her off to look at her.

She had got from bed to meet him, hearing his coming; hastily bundling into her "church dress," the things left at hand. The lace collarette was unhooked, hanging unkempt, her sallow neck was bare, her flatness of breast, her hardness of speech and awkwardness—never had she come beyond the backwoods rearing of the Pennsylvania mountains, everywhere she lacked relief and resonance, she was a dried leaf flapping against a wall in November, accenting the bleak day.

"I expected it!" the son cried, "I tried to tiptoe past your room—I knew you'd get up to assure yourself that I had not been run over or drowned on the way home. Mother, you'll have to be disciplined!"

"My Corbetty," she quavered. She had named him after some unknown martyr she had read of decades ago in the *Christian Herald* who had gone to Uganda and been speared by the natives after Communion; only to be scandalized years later when

a popular pugilist of the name uprose to be ever after associated, somehow, in her mind, and sinfully, with the missionary winging his way to Heaven, and what was worse, with her son's career. Many a prayer she had uttered for the trinity: her second-born; the martyr, speared and, likely as not, baked thereafter; and the prize-fighter, that he be led from the way of Sodom.

"My boy!" she went on, and then they were silent in the primal trust, mother and son, overarching all her occasional fears and doubts. He had gone far from her faith, her ways of life; she could not comprehend his work and position, the dim realization she had of him as an object of invective and attack, of fighting deeds and splendid purposes—she could understand nothing at all; but she could flutter to his breast, and know, by his fond unfearing eyes, that he was her boy and unchanged—God did not make such men for doubt nor dishonor.

The old lady saw his wife's eyes on them in this embrace, her composed smile. This second woman he had married? . . . Well, she was unlike anything Mrs. Ennisley had dreamed of—foreign people to her had always been the bewhiskered Russian who had bought a forty of the farm, guttural, uncouth, his wife wearing a flaming headcloth of some sort and huge shoes. But this foreign wife of Corbett's—a superb creature, suggesting art calendars—the Iowa mother concealed what of her awe and distrust she could. It seemed the wife took too easily,

this furtive half-fear, half-veneration, the shy, mothering desire to love and be understood—that she was too idly tolerant, condescending, letting things go as they fell.

Corbett had concealed his hurts at her occasional enigmatic smile upon this homely, confiding mother love. They were as far apart as the poles, the wife with her astonishing verisimilitude of old-world caste and place, the mother with that lean-necked, insecure mentality of the pioneering woman—a tribe of the era of graham bread and Epsom salts after the generation of cornbread and sidemeat—a race of women who gave their stomachs to found an empire and acquired a querulant dyspepsia to suckle giants for the land.

"My boy," she said again, in that Puritanic dissembling of sentiment of which the West has inherited overmuch, "'pears like I never can git to see you any more—traipsin' off to Alabama and then Washington and land knows where next! 'Pears like we never git a chance to say howdy to each other any more."

Corbett laughed: "Little mother, some day I'll lay off harness—a whole week, and we'll run out to Iowa Center when strawberries are ripe, and Archie and I will loaf in our shirtsleeves and cut the old lawn and fish the same old creeks."

"I see you," she returned, with playful disdain, "when yore dead and buried, you'll rest. I come down here a week Thursday, and you only been

home three nights seems to me. 'Tain't natural for a body to go traipsin' so."

"I had to go on to Washington," he smiled. "Hungerford wanted to see me about the draft of the Ford bill. I rushed back soon as I could just to be with you, mother—you and Demetra, and my little Tad."

She knew of Hungerford—a brilliant congressman of one of the audacious states beyond the Missouri. Only the other week she had read in the Green County *Republican,* on the "patent inside" that he was a leader of the "insurgents," and *Rural Life* had denounced his attitude as to the duty on hides. She was not sure of Hungerford, and of the enticings of the great world for her boy—*Rural Life* had called the Kansan a "traitor."

"Land, what big men you do meet East," she went on, "going to New York and them places like they were Oskaloosa or Des Moines. New York must be a pretty place," she added plaintively, "a body reads so much about it."

He repressed his smile, seeing on his wife's face one that he wished was averted. "Mother," he cried gaily, "some day we'll make a trip and I'll introduce you to the president. And by the way, I'm to lunch with him before the session's over."

"Eatin' with the president!" she now went on. "Corbetty, what next is a-goin' to happen to you?"

He laughed in his proud exultance—it *had* thrilled him as did his joy of work—that flush of happiness

which only the success of young days gives when there is no sequent-wisdom to lessen the greatness of achievement. "The president? Why, mother, I talked with him last week. He's a bully fellow—you'd like him. He'd make you think of Archie—sure he would! Same way of tearing into things as that country editor brother of mine in a fall election!" He went across to take her hands again, laughing still: "Mother, it's fine to mix with big men, even if you have to fight 'em! It clears your brain—it makes you climb out of bed in the morning and sting yourself with a cold bath and jump into your fighting clothes and get back to the game—to put heart and mind and hand against the biggest—and know that they're *feeling* you! Why, it's simply great!"

She looked her fond dismay: "Corbetty, some day you'll break down with all this jumpin' round. It ain't natural to be carryin' on so. Ain't so, Demetry?"

She forced her brief little diffident laugh as always she did when addressing this foreign wife, this daughter that she couldn't understand. "Ain't so?"

Demetra smiled indolently: "These American men are such tremendous dynamos—they're like eager children with their loves and hates and ambitions running and screaming in the sun."

The professor laid back, putting his hands together, looking upward.

"I suppose I have all their faults," he began. "I

suppose we nationally lack repose, a consciousness of continuity, of tradition or philosophical perspective. We don't know enough to be tired—world-tired—with all our questions answered and demands refuted as they've been refuted in older civilizations. But that's the grand thing—this sense of newness, this lack of tradition—we're going far to hack out big things for our own. We're only hammering away roughly, but there'll be no moral or spiritual uplift until the rough things are hammered smooth." And with the loosening of his thoughts he went on in his swift pedantry of the class-room, fired with his charm of discourse, his fighting way—"But it's the world-consciousness, now—a world-faith, now that God's a mere naturalistic motive—a law behind the chemistry and mechanics. It seems that has to be our only religion, our only light—truth." He looked a bit self-conscious, glancing at his mother. She did not understand the least of it; she watched him in admiration. "To make a rough way for the better type to come and have its turn at the problem. And here—this wonderful America! There never was such a chance for the higher evolution—the new, splendid man. Dear—" he addressed the wife, idling at the piano now, listening to him with the detached interest which she had always for his ardors—"it comes right down to that. It's why we're fighting to prevent the little Polack emigrant girls and the hill cracker children from standing on their feet eleven hours a night at Rand's mills—they must

be the mothers for the great process. If only we all could see the worth of the human animal—the mere struggling type of nature seeking to rise! That's my philosophy—that's why I'm fighting."

The little collarless woman, her scrawny neck and flat bosom of the patient, tired, untutored western mother of pioneering adventures, listened, awed—it reminded her, some way or other, of his high school valedictory! She remembered her beating heart that June morning, with the big main room hushed and the humming-birds in the window's jessamine—she rose with her droll and pathetic negation: "'Pears like a body just could sit here all night and listen to you. But it's eleven and after, and decent folks are all abed. My boy, you're tired, and Demetry, that light ain't fit for a body's eyes on that piano."

The wife glanced easily at her. When the mother had gone, after her good nights, they were quiet. Corbett's mind went back to his hard youth, the grind of his career—college debater, star thesis man, his struggling tutorship—always behind him in his mother and first wife the simple faith and pioneering strength of home-keeping women. And Demetra could never see it all; she had seemed content to settle back, sheltered, bringing nothing to his eager life, his buoyant dreams—a reverie of living—and he loved her so!

From this hungry thought his mind went to his work for solace. "I went to a meeting of the strikers Thursday. Demetra, it was pathetic—the men and

children—they want so to learn, to find a way. There's a curious mixture there—the native hill crackers and the south of Europe emigrants enticed over here by agents and dumped into the mills—what an awakening! Dirty, ignorant—foreign. Most of Rand's are Polacks."

"Poles?" the wife smiled. "Corbett, I'm one!"

He laughed deprecatingly, caught her again in his boy's way: "Dear heart—you're Demetra—my wife . . . always kind and true!"

She drew his brown head down—she was so sure of him, her power over him—yet she felt his hurt. Marriage had not been to her what he had dreamed—his idealizing enwrapped it as it did his outer life—he wanted it full, complete in each ineffable relation of soul, mind, body. Love, its delicious stealth, its long embraces, the inordinate worship of the senses—he was a man to feel, exult here as splendidly as in his mighty quests for the race . . . and it seemed she could not understand. He would have blent his blood and soul with hers for this race-dream, to bring the ennobling type through parenthood, and she could not see.

But always he was seeking; he murmured now: "A man's big work, a fight, and from it all to have a home to come to—and you, dear, you!"

It appeared to-night she was curiously shaken, creeping nearer him. She whispered: "Yes—and O, my husband, love me!"

And in one of those rare, unifying silences which

come before the complacent disillusionment of the five-year's married is complete, cattle-like, they sat. Indeed, he could not remember when she had seemed so near, so dear, so under his hand. He had given her peace. From his sore battles and great errantries he had found time for patience, faith, love—he had given and she had accepted. But to-night she seemed moved beyond her content; he spoke of something that had been on him long:

"Demetra, I've wondered at times if everything went against me—if I was discredited at the university because of the complaints against my radicalism—if it would hurt you?"

"Hurt me?" She stirred, looked at him wonderingly.

"Dear, there are bigger things than a class-room. Sometimes I want to swing from it, get in the fighting line of the socialistic movement—to turn my whole life to that miserable cotton mill town and its problems. There's so much for a man to fight for!"

"That's like you, Corbett," she smiled, "always giving something. Last year half your salary went to that social settlement in the mill shanties. That's why I didn't get the furs you promised me!"

He laughed with her playfulness—his heedlessness was a seasonal joke. "Well," she went on, "I remember the mills were unpleasant enough. And how the children howled at our machine when the judge and I went through mill-town on that trip there. And the girls—you should have seen their

clothes—they were positively picturesque. One little thing had a meal sack on with holes cut for her arms. She didn't look more than six, but I suppose they do get dwarfed."

"Yes. In a strike they actually starve."

Her fingers idly played with the silken cord of the pillow on which she leaned: "It's bad—but if Justice Rand stands by you, they can't hurt you, Corbett. He helped found the university."

"Yes, with money twisted out of the children's lives. Eight hundred babies, almost, who crawl out of the stinking shanties, night and day shifts, to give themselves to what? To what we call civilization—to build some other lives into sweetness, into light." She had shivered—she drew up the dominant figure that had made men turn to look at her on the street. He saw her face, touched as he had never known it: "Men call me an agitator," he went on gently, "but there's got to be a fighting line somewhere—the fighting men ahead of the constructing army. Say what you please, it's war, class war, and there's no compromise—nothing except a complete readjustment of human relations—the substitution of service and not profit as the end of living and working. Yes, there's got to be a fighting line ahead somewhere!"

"They say some bitter things of you," she answered—"they call you dangerous—a revolutionist."

He laughed: "So were Garrison—Luther—Christ—very dangerous! I know all the threats and

intrigues brought to oust me. It's Judge Rand who's made my career possible—not only at the university, but in the bigger work—Washington and South. He's conservative, powerful, even yet, when he's almost out of harness."

"And yet," she went on, "he, the justice, owns the mills!"

The dreamer sighed: "I know. That's the curious thing in human nature. It's the business idea—the American idea. First, profit by any means—anyhow—it's your business alone. Get your money, anyhow, at any cost, then build your hospitals, schools, libraries—be honest, kindly, broad-souled—but *first* take your profit. And the cotton mills?—what chance have eight hundred children against the big companies? What earthly chance have they if there are not men fighting for them?"

The foreign wife had stirred: "The men—" she muttered—"the strong men for the children. O, that's the way the barbarians would have fought—the strong men for the little children!"

He looked in wonder at her—she had risen to pace the floor.

"Corbett, I remember once, I saw a little one not eight years old with the tired, hopeless face of a woman of fifty. It was one of the immigrants—a Polish baby—one of my own race—the beaten people." She came near him, she leaned dominant, a splendid barbarian holding within her hates, loves—a mother animal wild with the wrongs of the

hunted. "Corbett, for a moment I hated you—America—rich, proud, free! I was a peasant girl back a thousand years with the whip of some lord across my shoulders!"

He started up, seizing her hand, his eyes afire with fighting: "Demetra! This is like the woman I dreamed of! I used to think of you—a mother—a leader—you, a foreign woman for whom America has done so much—finding a way for the beaten people pouring in—I dreamed of you in some great part. The great, new, unfearing women! I believe in them so. I want them aroused, enfranchised—what a splendid race they could bring!"

"Ah, well!" She smiled now, quite recovered, it appeared: "I want you to go on—I want to be proud—proud!"

He had her hand in his happiness: "Dear girl, you hearten a man—you can send him out big and brave. And sometimes I thought you didn't care—that I was only a dreamer." His old wistfulness crept back: "And suppose I had to leave the university? If I get Rand's endowment for the mill school we might have to go live there."

"Go? Live at Rand's mills?" He felt her drawing slowly from him: "You mean at your social settlement?"

He did not understand. "There'd be big work. We'd need women—earnest, helpful women. Dear, you'd be so much—you, a Polish woman, among [redacted] own people, the eager, ignorant emigrants. Do

you know you're such a compound?—you with an ancestry of the common lot, have such a sort of luxuriousness?" He looked on her animal beauty, autumnal, golden—he laughed with his man's joy of it. "Your life so strange abroad, singing, learning, provided for when a child by some man, you never knew exactly for what. Then Washington—meeting so many men in all sorts of curious experiences. It seems as if you should know all, all that life could mean for a woman—the lowest to the highest—you've really had a wonderful life. You've sprung like a great chrysanthemum from the soil. That was my hope in you. It showed what might be done—what you, yourself, might help along—the rising of the race, the making of its mothers."

Her smile was a reverie so baffling that he paused.

"A little Polish girl?" she mused—"so long ago that I've almost forgotten even the tongue. And the man who aided me—a child?"

He stirred—he had been patient long: "Dear, have I ever asked of you more than you wished to tell me?"

"Corbett, did I ever deceive you? I told you when you married me I was tired, tired. I hoped for peace, rest, after the fight of it all. Perhaps I've disappointed you, you and your dear little country mother, your college circles. . . . The women have never quite received me, Corbett."

"Ah, well, what's the matter with these women?"

She laughed with some luxurious disdain. "I

am Demetra. I smile, perhaps, at their inconsequential readings and tabby teas. They're rather dreary to me. I've been used to men—I seem to get things done with them. And I live my own life here." She moved with a sinuous accenting of the yellow light enrobing her, and took his hands: "Please, please, Corbett, don't be hurt. I'm trying to adjust myself—to be the wife. After a woman's thirty, it takes adjustment."

Her ease had come again, the thing that always brought his wistful turning: "Dear heart, I know. Our lives have been different, haven't they? Mine such a battle always, working my way through college by doing janitor work—anything—until I won the Frost scholarship. And then on, always the big fight—ahead of me now, ever the big fight!"

"I've honored every battle," she replied slowly, and as always, when she gave him opening, all the inner pathos of the man flashed out. He tried to put an arm about her as she bent to him:

"If you could know," he muttered. "Always it's as if I stood before a temple in you and could not enter, a shrine in you that none had found—your soul!"

She checked a little laugh: "How you've misread me, Corbett! All the great beautiful dreams you have of me! And I'm none of them. Only a woman who was tired—a woman who'd like to imagine she was little and cared for, instead of being big and disenchantingly self-reliant. And I don't want to do

big things, or lead movements—merely to slip away and rest."

"No—no—" he murmured, shielding his illusion. "Ah, well, dear, we're all hammering away. It's the real problem—to find ourselves, to be our best and give our best, even if only a little!"

For a time he was still and then laughed again, shortly, as a man will, coming from a musing: "And I asked you to go South—to mill-town—to help teach a lot of dirty emigrant girls to sew, bake, read, write, or at least be clean. To be Americans—mothers for the new America! It seems I thought you had a power that could send a man on to any greatness."

"You dreamer, you!" she smiled. And they were still, he staring at the little fire, and she from the window, when the maid entered.

"Miss Hergov's in the study," she announced.

At once he started up, greeting the girl with protests, helping her with her wet veil. The wife looked amusedly on. Corbett was at his boy's pranks and slang as he could turn from one mood to another: "Louise, you shouldn't have come—a night like this. Let the correspondence go hang! Your loyalty is simply a disaster—and your feet are wet, I know!"

Miss Hergov spread her slim hands to the fire while Ennisley brought a chair. The wife studied them with her usual tolerant and amused detachment, her sureness over him, in it the greed which

women love to show another. She saw his eyes watching with frank, fond interest the rain drip from the trim gaiters under Miss Hergov's blue skirt. "You're another one of these dynamos in the flesh," she murmured. Ennisley laughed; it seemed that his cheery simplicity had come back with his secretary's entrance—his dreams and work were vivified and real.

"Louise is a whole power plant!" he retorted. "Roderman of the commission asked me the other day how I got so much done—four lectures a week at the university, grinding away on my reports, and looking after the work at Rand's mills, to say nothing of bothering the legislatures in season and out, and running off a magazine article now and then. Well, it's Louise—all Louise. I'm afraid some fellow will offer her more than I can afford to pay her one of these days—or marry her!"

The pale Jew girl smiled deprecatingly. Mrs. Ennisley's lips parted; she was used to these extravagances. "I suppose you two will want to work," she said. "And, Louise, you can't go home again. There are five unused bedrooms in this barn of a house."

"Of course she'll stay!" announced Ennisley buoyantly. "Why, just to think of her coming!"

Louise tried to protest, but the wife went to see to the heating of a room, and the other turned back to the genial host.

"Anything happened?" he began, in the frank un-

derstanding of their labors. "I've let everything go except the strike at Rand's mills. Been trying to get an eight-hour agreement. I offered to let up on the fight in the legislature if the operators would meet us there. But the matter's ugly, Louise."

"There's danger of violence?"

"I'm afraid of it. Some wild-eyed agitators have been among the yard men. They've won away some of the boys whom we'd been helping at the mill settlement. It makes me nervous at times."

"The money you hope from Judge Rand for your school down there?" she queried. "Violence would make him bitter—yes."

He nodded intimately at her quick grasp of the heart of the problem. "And at the university—it would hurt me. And the cause, too. They're beginning to identify me with the political propaganda of socialism, I see by the newspapers," he laughed blithely. It was good to be with her again, to have speech and understanding untrammeled and confidentially colloquial of the big things of his life.

"I know," she answered. "Altmayer was in to see you, and some of the county candidates were with him. They spoke so feelingly of you—they do openly claim you. And the president of the garment workers, some young chap, showed me the circular in which the National Manufacturers' Association attack you and claim your reports are unfair on child labor."

Ennisley laughed again, with the light of battle

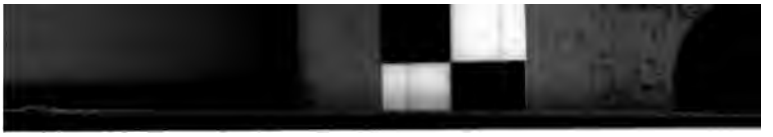
in his eye. He took the girl's hands in comforting comradeship. "Louise, anyway, you understand—you always understand. And sometimes it seems that you're the only one."

She watched him long; always it had been so. In the brief years of his early marriage—a laughing, blue-eyed young father, and later in his larger horizon, as he grew mentally and learned the fighting ways of the world—always, it seemed, she had been with him, the comrade, the inner agent. To her he had carried his sore hurts, and she had understood.

At times he found himself, with his ever-idealizing imagination, grasping at a formless faith that he owed much to her—that her sanity, intuition, her perspicacity in delicate issues to which he would have flung himself headlong, and repented—had been a clear light guiding his path.

They went to his little study, choked with familiar papers, books and heapings. His pipe, never smoked in Demetra's rooms, was on the torn and ink-stained blotter of the desk near the little silver frame encircling the picture of his dead wife with the lame child in her arms. By his chair was drawn up Louise's own, before it her type-writer. It was a common shrine; from it went his faiths, his dreams. To it and to her he came back from his defeats or with the joy of achievement.

The girl at the machine wheeled her little chair to look at him as he reached for the first of the letters she had brought. She was slender, her face had a



pallor which one forgot in the singularly direct and fixing beauty of her round blue eyes beneath straight black lashes. Her hair, heavy, coarse, purpled, was piled about her ears, completing her vivid contrasts, her white face, the blue eyes, the hair with its firm contour—behind these was a personality, compact, resolute. She was the daughter of an English woman and a Nihilist long rotted beyond Baikal; apostate, denationalized, a girl of mean streets but a hereditament of thought, she had come to be, through her dreary teaching days and as Doctor Ennisley's secretary, a student of futile philosophies, she burned with inner primal vengeances in her secret idealizing of self.

She had no relations, nothing. And cloaking her loneliness, her sex-hunger, her splendid dreams with steadfast work, she lived on with but one outlook for her life and that was the career of the man by her side. She wondered if, ever to him, she was but the shy, practical secretary; she wondered if he knew that she was passionate with the thought of heroic immolations, that at times the blood surged to her temples at the world wrongs of the proletaire from which she drew breed—that she played charming enactments for her soul. At one time she visualized her figure stepping before a black velvet curtain facing some vast auditorium, from her throat a song, amazing, unwritten, voicing the sadness of her race, of all the patient and the failed, a rapture from her wished-for glorification of life; and then

again she had a sweeter drama—she was to be a mother to bring a man-child to the world, the child of a strong man, with the prestige of deed. At times, by Corbett's side, her hands trembled, she felt herself one of his new race-mothers, the enfranchised and mighty women; and alone in the prim, hateful walls of her tiny flat, she found herself in tears before the pathos of all that life withheld—she loved him.

But she was, after all, merely Louise Hergov, secretary-stenographer to a busy man—a pale girl, unpretty save for her blue eyes, and with a shy consciousness of self that made her "practical." And before Demetra, the wife, she stood writhing, at times, with the smart of the other's easy dominance, tolerant, complacent, ungiving—she, who was afire with the need of expression, of freedom, of love, could only watch the man's soul starve for what she must deny, and starve herself.

Corbett, at times, felt the constraint his wife's presence put on Louise. From his chair now he looked from one woman to the other, the wife, idling, sensuous, autumn full; the girl, pale April.

Louise broke on his serious intent with the intimacy in which they labored. "I suppose you know Judge Rand's son is back?"

Ennisley started. "Herford Rand? Mrs. Ennisley did not mention it?"

"He was at the house yesterday. He is staying at John Bride's. I saw him there."

The professor sat forward; his frown stilled her, then she went on: "I wondered if it would make any difference—his being here—with your plans—the endowment for the mill school and everything you're trying to get through his father?"

"I'll tell you something." Ennisley spoke briefly in his business tone. "The judge's will still leaves him the mills—everything. I had hoped to change it, to turn the property over to the university and to the technical schools to be started at the mills—in fact, to put under way the biggest experiment in industrial sociology ever attempted. I'll tell you the big scheme some day. Louise, it's why this strike has upset me so—a single act of violence now would drive Judge Rand back from all I've led him to! I wanted him to leave his fortune for the greater and common good."

"And Rand, the son—he'd get nothing?"

"Why should he? What's one man's life to the lives of his thousand brothers? And twenty million dollars to Herford Rand, whose very memory haunts this house! I've never seen him, but he's *haunted* me—I've dreamed what manner of man he was—the master of the mills!"

CHAPTER IV

JOHN BRIDE'S block, the "grand property housin' forty families," was a hive of poor folk but not savage urban misery; artisans, meager clerklings, drivers, watchmen, teamsters and the like, people of family and living wage for the most part, and from them Old John got an indifferent rental which he yearly turned back for improvements. John got his tithe from them, it appeared, in his cheery pertinancy of interest in their lives and fortunes. To them, as to the board of directors of the road and the coterie of pioneers about the town, he was Brother John, eccentric, but loved the more. The poor folk pointed him out as the "millionaire flagman," and told with gusto of his day's work there. But John's fortune was not anywhere near this—the panic of '93 had done for his larger activities. He was, in fact, a figure forgotten in the bald huge uprise of the city's glut of wealth, he belonged to a day dim in its annals, the era before the fire.

The old Scot seemed well content to stand in the shelter of his wall and let the hurricane blow by—one could enrich and intensify one's human relations if one could no longer enlarge them. The time was

gone when Old Scotch John knew each station, siding, bridge and feeder, but still he held the road with a father's pride. It was more than an eccentric whim of human love that led him to be watchman for the thousand youngsters passing a dangerous morning way across the tracks to the big new school. There, by the rails, he could watch and dream of the pathway of empire to the wide lands. He had seen the mighty traverse, he felt his glory of service. And yardmen, division masters, engineers—all knew him, smiled with him.

John Bride, with all his idiosyncrasies, had a canny eye. His fine flats in a quarter where there were poor men, but men of wage, were always full and rentals paid to this hale and merry landlord.

"Stephen, man," he told his cousin at the Thursday dinner at Rand's house, "what'd ye have more? The land pays, the house pays, and I have all I wish and naught to leave it to—that's the whole philosophy. We all live, man, and well."

The justice bared his yellow teeth over his cigar. "I remember when you came from Edinboro you were no such fool, John. No, nor for forty years after. When you put through the La Crosse division and built the bridge you were no such fool as to dream of standing in your old age at a crossing to flag the trains. There's rheumatism in the air, these days, and pneumonia."

Brother John laughed: "Whose leg's the stiffest? And whose lung's stoutest—yours or mine? Stephie,

I tak my toll o' life. John Bride's services are no so cheap!"

The judge's mask-like face fixed to a trace of smiling. "You're as perverse in this matter as this college professor here is with his meddling with my mills. Shorter hours, more ventilation, inspection of the shanties by the state—God knows, since I let him go South with his schemes the mills have not paid four per cent. The superintendent says the operators openly charge the strike to him, and are hounding me for indulging his experiments."

"Let him be. Man, do ye need the money? If there's children in the mills standing eleven hours a day, why take 'em out. If there's wind whistlin' through the cracks of ye'r mill-town shanties of nights, why, stop the cracks. Man, it's simple."

The justice grunted, closing one eye against Brother John's smoke. He had had a deal of patience with all this but there was no law for its interpretation.

"John, you're full, too, of this modern day splutter. What are we coming to—the laws, society, or America—if men listen to your subversion? There's overmuch of this about. We must go back to the older republic and the standards when a man was a man on his own bottom and free to work with his own hands and brain. My line's fought in every war since Braddock, but it seems the day's come when America is not for Americans—nor for such as you whom the land's enriched in your half cen-

tury this side the water. It's that later breed of Europe that's subverting us and our old basic idea that men came to what they were worth."

"Their worth is more than profit. I say the land means more than divideends. Stephen, it's made you —and it's made me—who but America with its push-in' and crowdin' in of the new folk? What enriched ye but that? Ye sold them cotton and hauled 'em on ye'r roads. We owe more to the land than to sit on it and make a profit of it. There'll come a generation to see it, Stephie—service and not profit, for the men who build and lead. This land's the highway for all the peoples to travel. I stand and see the red lights o' the trains vanish off in the murk, and I think o' what they're buildin' out there—Huns and Italians, Poles and Jews—pressin' on to what grand journey's end! Eh, tell me—God's hand is on it—it's for that I stand by the crossin' wi' the flag, to go in service when I'm called."

The judge's grim smile tightened over his thin lips. "You are a good deal of a fool, Brother John. I once heard you spouting so to a board meeting of the Lake Northern."

"There's one thing that's never talked of at directors' meetin's that I yet heard, and that's whether or no there's right in a thing. I am fair tired of the profit idea altogether."

"John, you talk like the introduction of the professor's last book. I still call you a fool." The older man rubbed his smooth chin. "But I can't talk.

I've let the man go preach rank revolution to his pimply-faced young teachers at the university and send them out over the land—I, mind, who founded it. I let him go South and denounce my properties and wheedle me for a hundred thousand for his experiments. It's strange—I've been a hard man, John Bride."

John looked at him; a man of stubborn strength and of odd, hidden, human weaknesses. The Scot let his eyes wander about the somber dining-room, its blackened and austere furniture, its ancient plate and lighting; the brooding spirit of the master was on it all.

"A hard man, Stephen," he answered slowly. "Ye've eaten in on ye'rself. Ye've closed heart to human kindliness—what's all the clack o' the law beside it? Law and money—they canna loosen a man's soul. I'm minded, when I see ye, of Staley, the union engineer who's one of my tenants—him with his stump of an arm, who's just out of jail because he sneered when the court decided against him in his suit for damages against the road—ye and he are at the far eends of the brotherhood."

"And I will safely maintain," retorted the justice, "that the man sits in your house, rent-free because of it."

"He has bairns—a wife—"

"I thought so." The justice leaned closer over the cloth. "John, you fool—you do us honor. But have I been unjust?"

"Have ye been more than just? This week ye'r own boy came to me—he had been sent from this door, I take it."

The father settled back. He looked across his glasses at the other, his face again the unstirred mask, the eyes fixing coldly.

"We'd best not talk of him. John, I would not quarrel with you."

"A rough, adventuring de'il," John Bride muttered, "but his voice has a trick at times. I'm minded o' his mother."

The two old men's eyes were raised across the silver and the candlesticks to the portrait of a woman, dim, all but indistinguishable, at the room's end. For thirty-eight years Stephen Rand had dined in silence here, but each time, before the beginning of his lonely meal, his eyes had wandered once to his dead wife's picture. They had been years which had given bite to his common speech with men, and made the world stand from him.

"Ah, man," John Bride said softly. "It's long!"

The father's unmoved speech came back. "It'll be longer before I welcome him. There was his mother dying—the word she laid upon me that I train him for the ministry. I did, against blood and flesh and desire, I did, and it made me lose my own faith in God at the end. What do you recall, John Bride, of him—his mother's fortune, a church, as fair a start as anything could make—and you know the end. A girl he kept in London—a drab of his

student days, I take it—and then, in five years to the devil, a quarter million flung to thieves and beggars, and he disappears, to come back a tramp at best."

Brother John was still. He looked across at the picture of his cousin's wife. He wondered at this heritage of hate left by this gentle soul to son and father. He sighed; he had watched Stephen harden year by year over his memories; cut each human tie, —to come to stand in that terrible twilight of the aged, the embittered and the alone.

"A tramp then. Many's the father's hand reached out to such." Brother John sighed as he rose. "The prodigal found welcome, do ye mind?"

Stephen laughed with sudden real humor. "I was waiting for the Scotch in you to bring Scripture! When you can train Rand to parrot every text in them he can come eat at my table. 'Til then he can be damned."

Brother John laughed cheerily. "I'll find text for ye both. Let be—let be—come, I can beat ye at the billiards!"

"John Bride," the justice retorted, "I have guessed something. The fellow is with you? You took him in?"

"There's blood o' mine in him—he's Jennie's son."

They stood under the play of the light through the chandeliers, two old men, one priestly shaven, one smoothing his white underbeard. "I remember, Stephie, when I carried him through these halls—

a bonny lad that could no more than toddle. And his little mother skipped before us. And there was Donald—the auld house was over-cheery then—when I ate my first Thursday dinner wi' ye in this darksome room."

The justice did not answer; John Bride came nearer. "A bit o' his mother's eyes and laugh in him—the big man now. He's stayin' wi' me, Stephen, no so far away." John went slowly on: "Did ye turn him off again with no chance for word?"

"I did not turn him off. He can come sleep here and eat of my providing—but not near me or with me. If he wants word with me let him come civilly—let him show himself a man at last and not a clown and waster."

"I'll thank ye for this. I'll have him come at the last—and civil. I think Jennie'd meet me easier—there's service in it."

"John Bride," the judge retorted dryly, "be still of this. Come to the billiards."

CHAPTER V

RAND came to his father's house the next day unbidden and alone. He found his way to the little breakfast-room of the Ennisleys' apartments, bright with the April sun on the new verdure without, where the mistress of the home discovered him, imperturbable, and with peremptory demands upon the ill-humor of the old serving-maid, who was stupefied at this intrusion. She, indeed, was hastening to protest to Mrs. Ennisley when the latter entered.

The wife paused at the door, watching silently, her arms filled with the white spring bloom of daisies from the tumble-down old conservatory in the rear of the yard, which she had intended for the breakfast table. The room was one set apart for their exclusive use as guests of the recluse owner. After a while, dwelling on Rand's unbidden presence, she remarked:

"I have an impression that you're always eating. I hope you are well?"

"Admirably. The woman's coffee is exceptional —much better than her temper."

"She is a patient soul."

"So is a dog. I remember the old dame twenty years ago—she had the same virtue. Eh, what's it ever done for her? Patience—it shrunk and withered on her bones, it ate out her heart—this patience. It's a dog's servile trick."

The old maid had left the room. Rand looked up to the wife, to find her frank study on him. Her luxurious morning ease pricked him: his life had been without the discipline of tradition, he had the appeal of a child's license to women in his younger days. They were for ever seeking the final chivalry in him, as women will in those who deny their challenge.

"Well," the wife went on composedly, "it's the woman who pays with patience even if it means her bones and soul. Your father must have had a faculty for holding his people—the servants are gray in his service."

"Everything here is rotted with age. I remember as a boy they were old then. I had the same impression the other day when the butler hesitated about letting me in. I remembered the same fishy eye on me—the same suspicion—they all hate me. I believe they have an eye on a share in my birthright."

"I supposed you'd sold it long ago—for a mess of cocktails."

He laughed with a reckless pleasure as she arranged the flowers, a great gold and white bloom in the sunlight on the table. Into the clear serenity of the home had come a breath of careless ways.

"Aren't they dear?" she said, and held the vase for his inspection. The hard lines of his face relaxed, his eyes for a moment less somber; he looked about the home spot—you would have said there was in him a wistfulness. A moment, and his old flippant looseness came back; but he watched her fingers among the soil-sweet stems and leaves.

"Somehow, you have made this end of the house less a tomb." His mood sharpened: "You've changed amazingly. I see it now—older. There's a line between your eyes. This Ennisley—how did you come to marry him? You were growing older? That is a disaster to the cleverest. An interesting woman only marries to secure a refuge from which to make other forays if she wishes."

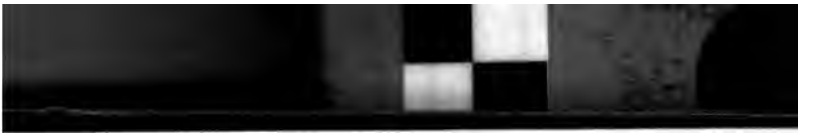
She turned away in cold reserve: "Enough—I'm married, you see."

"And going to Rand's mills, Ennisley said the other night. By the Lord, you in a mill-town! You, who would give nothing to any man except for ease, position,—a refuge when you were tired. Eh, *you* —at Randsville!"

"It's not true we're going there. This strike is uglier than ever. But I—I'm hopeless in such matters."

"And at your feet Ennisley crouches, watching you like a fond dog. Eh—men are fools!"

The wife in silence looked across the flit of spring green to the sparrows in the bare ivy of the next house wall.



"Your position here is absurd," she said at last, and her voice had impersonalized her interest in him. "Your father refuses to receive you—you are a fugitive, you say. You dare come here day by day, unasked—a challenge to every good and loyal thought that can arise in this house. Have you nothing beyond it all?"

His small eyes twinkled malice: "Sufficient unto the day. I need not think—Brother John does that for me. I eat, sleep, drink, quarrel with him, read his dreary Scotch books. But he's got a soul. I'll tell you something. I'm tired of being hunted. I was known by another name in the Telluride camps. Here, as Stephen Rand's son, I've nothing to fear from the Colorado military—anyhow, their guard is rotted and forgotten now, or ought to be. And I'm back—I want my place. Here the cotton mills have grown monstrous with profit. They've made the old man hog-fat with money, and money's power. I want it—I'm going to stay. That college husband of yours is trying to wheedle half Rand's fortune to his preaching, and I want to stay and make my place. I think, in fact, I will go, hat in hand, and a hangdog face, and ask that old clacker of laws to forgive me. He's got money, and it ought to be mine. Money's power—I could sting the soul of the world to madness if I had enough money."

She watched his Jesuit's mouth. "Be still," she said quietly. "His mother's here."

Mrs. Ennisley looked timidly in the room. She

saw her daughter-in-law and came on with her husky note of equivocating apology, her hand up to her skinny neck to see if her collar was properly pinned —which it was not, an inch of yellow flesh between it and the band. "Demetry," she quavered, "is my boy up yit?"

"In the study and waiting to be called. He's working, as usual, before breakfast."

The little old lady from Iowa peered uncertainly at the man across the table. His rough coat, the blue shirt collar upturned—the garb seemed friendly to her in the stealthy foreign atmosphere of this great house which always appalled her. Rand looked gravely back at her, the ungainly figure, the ill-made dress. He nodded slowly, and she made a vague curtesy.

"This is Judge Rand's son, mother," the wife said indifferently.

The country woman was startled: "So? I heard—" she went on, after a nervous pause—"that you'd once been a preacher o' the Word."

He smiled; the wife's face hardened. "I am more, madam; I am the text."

Her poor wits wandered; she fluttered about the room, a hapless mother bird, bedraggled before the full-plumed nurture of the other woman; she tried to smile at his evident pleasantry. "It's noble work, sir, for them that's called. I wanted my son to prepare for the ministry and he thought well of it once—" she broke off, fatuously laughing to put

herself at ease. Her son had entered. He was distinctive in his silk morning jacket, but his eyes had a wild look—you would have believed him trapped. And behind him was Miss Hergov. The secretary held a yellow telegraph form which now the professor took mechanically, with no heed to his mother's turning.

"A riot at the mills," he said studiedly, "a bomb thrown among the police at the gate of Rand's stockade. Five were killed."

In the peace of the day, the windows open to the north air, the swallows twittering across the grass, morning wet and cobwebbed, they were still. The telegram fluttered from Corbett's fingers to the carpet. And without moving from her steps the wife's white hand reached to it, picked it up. They could each hear the crinkle of the paper as she smoothed it to read.

"Yes," she answered slowly, "just as you thought everything was settled."

The mother looked on them in bewildered fear and silence.

"It's bad—" Corbett spoke as a man briefly stunned—"the thing has come—what I was trying to prevent—a bomb, and thrown from the steps of the university settlement—my boys, the mill-hands I'd worked for!"

Behind him Louise Hergov had moved up. She touched his arm, a motion so soft that they seemed not to see. But Rand's alert eyes were on her and

on the other man's start and then his quick relief, as if the girl had whispered some noble solace.

The wife came swiftly to him. "Corbett—it's ruin!"

"An outrage—" he went gravely on, "planned by some of the anarchistic element that came down from New Jersey when the strike began. I knew there were agitators imported—secret meetings of hotheads—the foreign element."

"The mill-hands you were teaching English?" cried the wife. "*You* taught them. Corbett, they'll lay it to you—the mill owners, the papers, the courts!"

"I suppose so." He looked at Louise by his side. "It's a sad ending of all I tried down there."

"No," retorted the secretary, "you never taught violence! You tried to help—splendidly!" She caught his hand and held it with her cry—"You gave yourself, and they shall understand—the whole world shall!"

The color rose to her pale face; she held his hand in a caress. The wife's eyes were on them. "Good somehow—" the girl pleaded—"O, good must come of it all!"

"But the endowment from Judge Rand," the wife persisted, "and your place at the university—everything! You've been so foolishly bitter—denouncing the absentee proprietors, the legislature, the industrial system—and they've said you were making class war—class hatred—"

She saw Rand's cunning eyes on her, then shift to the girl and to her husband—his somber, enigmatic smile, then his unmoved gravity.

The professor stood back, his arms folded, he sighed with an air of resignation: "I taught what I saw—the larger truth, the bigger hope. I went far, but there must be strong words and hard knocks. I know the operators want to break me—that there are millions of dollars ready to discredit me before all America—but it's my work—a man's work. I'll not go back an inch."

The wife faltered. He broke from Louise's side and came to her. "I know," she went on, "but, Corbett, your career—your home—place—I—your wife—"

The secretary turned away to the window. The old mother watched them; then she came lamely to Corbett's other side, her hand went up to his shoulder.

"My children," she quavered, "a man who's done no wrong can't be afraid. And my boy's done nothin' wrong, and he can't be afraid, no—never. I never brung my boy up to be afraid o' truth—to fear to face it."

The son started; he put his other arm around her in his old boyish simplicity, his need of homely words, and women's praise. "Little mother, don't worry. And, Demetra, whatever comes we'll fight it out together. It's a set-back, that's all. It can't harm me—stop me."

"That's my boy," the mother whispered, her fond, foolish chuckle coming, her yellow hand patting his cheek. "He can't go far off the track, for I set him on it right—he allus knew the right and did the right—allus. His pore pa and I decided that for our young ones before ever they was born—before the war when we come West from Pennsylvanny, month after month in the wagon train. And when we all got West and across the Missouri, the men fightin' off the Indians clean to Cheyenne, where we settled first, and Jared trapped and traded long afore railroads come, allus we thought that; and when the war came we packed up and came fightin' back to civilization so's Jared could git in the army, we thought that—allus that some day we'd have sons to make men of big enough for all creation and its problems whatever they was to be. And so we raised 'em when they come. Them's my boys—them's what I gave."

She finished and looked about in her odd little confusion, but bright in her pride—she lent again to the son her embrace, and the group was still. The stenographer looked from the window; Rand, by the table, was in one of his rare reserves; then he rose and came near the old woman, bowing gravely.

"Mother," he said, his full voice like a bell, "when the epic's written you'll have a place. Here, you soft-skinned woman—listen!"

But the wife spoke to him with a bitter incredulity: "Ah, you! Is it anything to you? Here's

something you can't play at—these police dynamited."

"The fools," he murmured—"they were paid for it—what of it?"

Corbett Ennisley stirred. "Rand, it's pure anarchy you talk—and you'll come to be the master of the mills, I suppose. The police—five killed in a riot there!"

"Eh—the fools. And these strikers—these fellows who are eternally hammering one another. Five dead—eh? For my profit."

"Rand, the police died in defense of your property, in their duty."

"Exactly—the dull fools. What do I, or my property, care for them or their duty? What does my money care about them now?"

Corbett turned away. Miss Hergov from the window caught his despair. The Jew girl's eyes went to the man at the table with a fascination she could not resist. This, then, was to be the owner of the grim house, the director of its fortunes, the master of the south mills. In this pagan was to be power over the lives of men and women he had never seen, of whom he would never hear; of destinies to go down obscure, forgotten—out of these, their flesh and souls and dreams, he would build the castle of his desires. The girl looked at him with a long, slow-gathering hate. The professor spoke in the silence; his voice was husky.

"I heard last night, your father would forgive

you. Ah, you—who have defied all human bonds! There's no such thing with you as duty."

"It's all very admirable—this duty. The other fellow's duty. It's what keeps the collar about his neck and his head bowed—it is, in fact, why the race crawls about us. Duty is the last virtue of the weak, as patriotism is the refuge of the scoundrel. And it comes cheap enough. When I own Rand's mills I can get children to spool cotton, and foremen to drive, and police to shoot and lawyers to cackle one way or other—each for the precious jewel—his duty. It is an admirable thing, this duty—small wonder we are pleased with it."

The other man did not face him. It seemed that the bright ardors of his soul had died. The outcast sat among them and it was as if they were obsessed, as if on them and the fair day a shade had fallen. The little country woman clucked, she seemed struggling to get past something that had been thrust down her weak throat. At last Rand went on, easily, untouched, his eyelids merely lifting to the other:

"Doctor Ennisley, I believe they call you a socialist?"

"Men have." Ennisley's mood had hardened.

"Well, get money. You can't be a prophet of the brotherhood without money. Get money, or it will get you. It will sear over your fine dreams; it will sicken your soul with failure. I swear to you, get money—it's power; it's the whip-hand over Fate; it's the magician that can dazzle the eyes of men;

that can ward the avenging angels from you here, and buy prayers for you hereafter—yes, you can build your own god and fill his temple with priests to praise him—with money. Eh?—I know!"

"I've thought of you at times," Corbett muttered, "years, when you were to me nothing but a name that was whispered, a legend of this house. . . . It seems I wondered if you would come back, and what manner of man you'd be! I dreamed of some great thing in you—you might do so much—so much! The mills—and three thousand souls dependent on them! Twenty million dollars, I think they say you'll have." His flash of eagerness had died—"Yes, I wondered what manner of man you'd be—you, the rich man's son?"

"And now you see, eh? I'm here—I consent to stay—to be the tame dog—for money. Rand's money—it's power, life—it can gild the dreams of a human soul—it can make life exquisite—a poem. And it can make men go about you in whispers and bend their backs and fetch and carry; yes, and whimper and beg—mere poor brutes who have to eat, they say! Eh?—do you believe me? I know—I've been on the road, a beggar. I've crawled along the highway, crippled, dragging legs that seemed they'd never walk again." He drew slowly from his pockets a gold coin and held it where it dazzled in the sunshine. "See; it's the magician's crystal. You can, in fact, see the world, hell and Heaven through it—with it you can change the prayers of men to

their God. I say, then—get money; it alone can work your miracles for you."

Corbett rose; he laughed aimlessly. "And you're the man I dreamed of! That I thought a soul was in—you, the master of the mills! O, I dreamed you might feel some breath of the brotherhood arousing the world—the great unrest, social, spiritual—the wonderful new world of thought, of human feeling, for the race to come!"

With a smile the rich man's son watched him. They stood across the room, the antithesis each of all the other meant for himself, his relation to his world—the man who had come fighting up for the regeneration, the outpost taking the brunt of savage wars before the era of the builders; and the other, the defying materialist, the predatory lord, the individualist. Between them as they stood the age of the North sea kings and an unborn era lay.

Rand's smile took an ironic pity.

"Doctor, what is the greatest thing in the world to you?"

"The brotherhood to come."

"You've never known it."

"I've given my life to it."

The other's supercilious smile deepened. "You are an old woman gabbling over a possible change in the weather."

The wife put in impatiently. "Enough of this. Here's this riot. They'll lay it to you, Corbett."

The doctor shook his head.

"What shall you do?" she persisted.

He was silent. Rand's voice came.

"Do?"

"Yes—yes! Here's this trouble on us!"

"Trouble is the most important thing in the world. It might make you really of some worth in the end."

They stared at him. The wife angrily repeated: "Now what shall we do?"

"Do? Why find the truth, and tell it."

"What nonsense. It may ruin him!"

"Well?" he smiled airily. "What then, if it does?"

The doctor stirred before this banter. "Demetra, I shall not fear—we shall not fear!"

"Fear?" Rand's wonder mocked him. "Why fear? What's it good for?"

Ennisley looked from him to his mother, and then with his arm about her, went from the room. The two other women stood staring at Rand, sunk now in a chair, replete with some satisfaction.

"You women," he said patiently, "are always flying for refuge to some cant or other, and fear is the chief. I have studied you long, seeking for something to glorify. I would like to fling you all in the cauldron of great decisions and have you come through erect, proud, free. I doubt if you ever do—the fear of the cave man and the mystery-mongering of priests is too much for you. Eh? The pity of it!"

They still stared at him; then the wife with an impatient gesture left the room. Louise Hergov did not stir; when he leisurely lifted his gaze he met her

eyes of astonishing blue fixed on him, widening, unfearing.

He laughed in some ascetic humor. But she did not, fighting to steel herself against the power of his ruthless measuring. She, who, in the secret drama of her soul, dreamed of herself as this which he sought to glorify.

CHAPTER VI

LOUISE looked at him quietly.

"Well," he murmured, and returned her gaze with that trace of menace in the outthrust of his chin, "are you, too, going to bark at me?" And after the condemnation of her study, he inquired, with some patience, "What's your name? It seems to have slipped my mind."

"I am Miss Hergov," she answered, in a dignity which but lightened his eye the more. She knew of him evilly well; his tradition was a part of the stealth of the house, the gibing silences, the grotesque shapes—he had robbed its honor, its peace—he was indifferent to its hate. To Louise he had come to personify, in her day-long residence here at work, the overreaching spirit of America; the overlording power of the holders of things—she, with her vague dreams, her memories of class oppression and old world hopelessness, now that he was before her, tried to despise him, to detest his dominance as an apotheosis of all she hated.

"You are a foreign woman," he went on, unmoved, "I can guess your history. Back of you somewhere is a skinny old dullard in a skull cap of velvet

—he sells and buys. You, yourself, would have been packed into the shops or factories for some man's profit but for some trick of fortune. A girl of the sweat-shops and tenements—and you escaped. You ought to be devilishly glad for any picking we throw you now. I, indeed, am sorry for you."

"Sorry?" she echoed, out of her surprise.

"Here—this—" he extended to her a golden-hearted marguerite from the table—"put this in your hair."

"My hair?"

"Yes." She had taken the thing in some wonder; he went on: "In your hair—make yourself over to please me. I am the rich man's son. You are Louise, a girl of the factories—I think there are some hundreds like you in the mills South."

She drew calmly from him. "The flower," he went on—"in your hair. Make yourself to please me—I assure you it is worth while. I do not often ask anything of a woman. There is a touch of the Orient in your features—lend it this bit of the daisy's heart. Your eyes—an astonishing blue. They call you a good woman, doubtless?"

She stirred—his dulcet tones went on in their garrulous shift and play; "I know it's irritating to a woman to be told she's good. But they are . . . so is a cow." And against her rising sense of outrage, he continued: "See here; let's look upon each other as we are. I am the rich man's son—you, a girl of that stupid and amoristic beast, the people.

Eh?—you and your kind? There are many of you in the south mills. I could open to you the gates of life such as you'll never see in all your cramped half-lived days. You are a magnificent dreamer. I could make life for you, with your exquisite senses, an incomparable thing—you can not even imagine it. Eh?—you're pretty—rather—and you're poor. You want to live, feel, be—to cry out with passion, to love and be loved—to have the rapture of life within you. And you have nothing except a sour duty that will cackle over the wrinkles to come in your face, the dimming of your eyes! Eh?—well—" he turned away, as if dismissing her with serious authority. "The marguerite—in your hair—close down—your neck in back. It is a spot on women where God hesitated with His fingers in the clay wondering if He should go on with the job. But put it there to remember that I am I, and you are you—and I offered you a flower and truth, and not pretense and dishonor."

She had laid the blossom on the table. Seeing it he came back, took it, held it to her. She stood watching his inexplicable humor, the shift of his sardonic theatricism; then, slowly, she took the daisy and went with it toward the door. He seemed looking at her in surprise; then his deep voice came.

"Wait." She turned. "The professor who gabbles about his brother man and all that. I see that you love him?"

She started, her wide eyes grew stony. She said

calmly: "Who are you, to question me?" And then sharply: "Why do you question me?"

"To amuse myself, merely. Truth?—it is a capital pastime! I wonder that none of the philosophers hit upon it."

"You to say that! *You*—of all men!" she cried out.

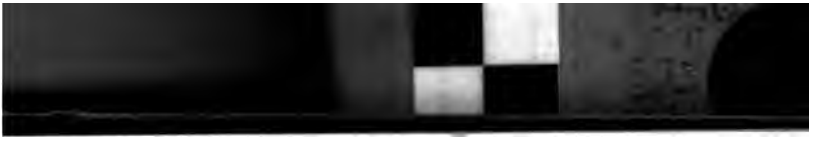
"I, my dear young person, have never told a lie since I was able to reason—since I made myself the exquisite instrument that I am."

"Good God!" she cried, in a sort of terror. "Who are you?"

And staring at his grave face an instant she turned and went out.

He lingered some moments. From the other room came the muffled voices of the wife and husband. Rand went from the apartments along the bare passage connecting the wing with the main house. The atmosphere of made things, of ancient woods, paper, carpetings and brasses, time-dulled and permeated with bleak associations—all the interflexed dreariness of the fixed and useless—assailed him. The house had the precise and ordered method of a case of butterflies under glass. The son remembered the smell of the great hall differing from that of the rear passage, and this from the staircase, and that from the library.

He went across the hall to the sunny room that opened on the decaying conservatory, its glass roof patched with tin sheet plates, the moldings loose,



the muslin shades half-drawn and torn. The sun from the spring sky fell through, flicking the massed and formal green of young narcissus, gladioli, carnations and beds of new-mixed earth. Beyond, the bent back of an old caretaker bobbed rhythmically up as he dug behind some benches.

But nearer him, by the door, he came upon Louise, crouched by a bed of moist fresh-smelling soil, her fingers in it, treasuring the tender spires of the baby narcissus. His shadow fell upon her, she looked up, and then quickly back; she spoke without again letting her eyes raise.

"I came here to get away—to put my hands in this—down here in the mother earth—to sweeten them—to be myself again," her hot voice swept on. "Your touch contaminated me!"

He watched her digging. She seemed fitted to this nurturing; as the promise of this young green so was she out of earth and air and water fashioned to turn her face upward to the light, to gladden a moment in the life of the sun, and pass back to her elemental diffusing.

"Something fresh and friendly, like dirt," she went on, checking the tremor in her throat. "I would like to lay my face in it—to be back with the great mother."

And then, because she was conscious of his intent on her as she worked, her eyes glancing along the vistas of greenery under the light, with no other noise than the old gardener dragging a hose some-

where beyond them, she had to look up at him: "I would rather you did not speak to me."

"Look at me again," he answered, "again! Your eyes—they are unfearing. It is unusual—the tribe has tamed the most."

And her steadfast gaze did not waver from his own. "You're strange," she muttered, after the pause. "I try to guess. It seems you might do great things . . . and I hate you!"

"I," he answered, unmoved, "am capable of all the heroisms. And, perhaps, no more. Large men for the heroisms, small men for the achievements."

"I think," she started up and stared at him, "that you are the very soul of vanity."

"You've hit upon a weakness," he retorted, "that appears to be truth. I do, indeed, lie awake nights cudgeling my brains as to how finely I may say a thing the next morning to make them gape at me. Truth?—you have hit upon its very button."

And while she watched him clearly, lashing her mind to make way against him, they heard the old gardener's voice raised in answer. Another spoke, and along the damp decayed brick walk Mrs. Ennisley came, her skirts flicking the overhanging grasses and sprawling shoots of the fern beds. She did not pause at sight of them, but, shading her eyes across the raised beds, spoke.

"Mr. Ennisley was looking for you, Louise. I sent Ellen, but she did not find you. There's some message—dictation—I believe."

The secretary nodded silently; they heard her step along the walk, and across the graveled space and wooden step to the house.

"Her eyes," Rand said at last, "there is a marvel in them. Have you noticed it?"

"This is like you—amuse yourself with your conceits. You're curiously like a child, who will absorb itself pulling a flower to pieces."

"A delight to look into, to find the soul in it, to lift the thing up and gaze at it with a child's wonder. That is the very stuff of life. Yes—to gaze with a child's wonder—a pagan's marveling at the mysteries."

The wife evaded him with a stinging impatience: "O, will you be still!"

"Have you ever known me silent when I wished to talk? I must consider myself fortunate. I have stumbled upon one of those intensely interesting affairs—a complete little human drama, acute, throbbing, with a variety of chances, holding within it all the potentialities of the soul."

"What are you saying?" she retorted sharply.

"Here is its completeness; old, very old, and yet new—new as the sunlight now upon you. Here is a man and two women. . . . You, naturally, are one. You, with your comforting love of ease and cat-like pleasure, to lie back complacent, accepting, purring—filled with the satisfaction of sense. And here is the other secretly aflame with the sacrificial idea. I swear to you she thinks herself

capable of all the immolations that a woman will suffer for love. She can imagine herself crucifying her heart to feed her soul on this hero-worship. It is, indeed, a sublimation past tears, or the possibility of gross act or speech. Therefore your cat's place by his fire is quite safe. She'd never consent to lose an atom of this martyring sweetness. She's quite mad with its quality—and I can't blame her. The sacrificial idea for love—even what they can't have—while episodic, common enough, with women has a distinct dramatic appeal. I, myself, have often been tempted to experiment with it."

She had stared at him, puzzled in suspicion. "What's this, now?" she cried.

He put the tips of his index fingers together and went on with an airy disinterestedness, as a good-humored schoolmaster would explain: "Why, it's plain enough. Here you are—the three. This girl at the man's feet—her life, all her life, in this worship of what she imagines is in him and his rushing about at his perplexities of saving the beast. Then, there are you, idle, amused, watching, sure of your power over him from his passion for you. And here is he, hurt, confused, half-turning from you at times to her, seeking the splendor he dimly feels is in her —eh? Am I not right—is not this the diagnosis? Or, we'll say, the prologue? And here I sit to see. I congratulate myself—I understand clearly—I hold up my crystal and watch with the singleness of admiration of the connoisseur. Here are three souls.

Here are jealousy, ambition, hate, pure dreams, infinite loyalty, and through and under all the easy flit back to the barbaric passions in us all. Even I can not quite complete my evolvement from them. Eh? The thing in this house charms me. It is as though one, in brushing aside the dust and rubbish of a curio-shop, had come upon a jewel, marvelously cut, which the dealer had no idea he possessed. You —he—the other woman! I shall be interested in watching it work out."

She drew up her strong shoulders in disdain. "Well, then?" she retorted, "what then?"

"Truth?" he ventured easily, "I am right?"

"As you please. I am indifferent."

"She loves him—and you watch, amused."

"Frankly, yes."

"So," he went on, with the satisfaction of a demonstrator of physics. "Thank you. Here he is between you two—blinded by passion for you, stumbling back to the hero-worship she gives him. He stands on the edge of the abyss."

She lost her studied calm. "You mean the riots—his career, reputation—in the balance?"

"When he falls who shall be by his side, eh? You, the warm cat by his fire, or she, the priestess of his soul? Ah, what a study! It will show you all up excellently!"

Her face paled as the cello of his voice flowed on. But she said calmly: "Go on—it's like you—play the fool. I do not fear you."

"The prologue," he continued leisurely, "is done. I shall now watch with uncommon interest. She loves him, and you? With the exception of myself, you have never loved anything. Well, do not—it is bad for the figure and the complexion."

Staring at him in a sort of hate she went back to the professor's mother, who was knitting a pink necktie for the reformer.

CHAPTER VII

BYRON HAYES, manager of, and junior partner in Rand's mills, came from the northern Alabama town two days after the riots to consult with the chief owner. He was a fair, rotund man of the American type, obsessed by class-consciousness, but unwittingly, as the self-made man invariably is. He had, therefore, the comfortable theory of the self-made, that the land and its development were held in fee from God for the cunning and the strong who could rise above the lesser; from which came inevitably the deduction that perpetuation of privilege inhered in him and his kind, whom God, the constitution and the courts had created and would maintain for this admirable duty before the eyes of other men. No one, therefore, was more ardent in his denunciation of "class feeling" and "class consciousness," than Mr. Hayes; his patriotism, too, had the ring of solid worth, the resonance of the respectable; he would—for God, the constitution and the courts—have sacrificed a million of his fellow-countrymen in the field; and would, moreover, have stayed at home busily to manufacture clothes to cover them, food to feed them, arms for them to

slay others; and would, as a final attestation of his devotion, have accepted the bonds of their indebtedness to him and his thence on while the Republic should endure, if need be.

Mr. Hayes had a minute and acrimonious report to make to the chief proprietor at Randsville; after this, he dined with the judge. By the latter's direction Doctor Ennisley was present, and, it being his usual night, John Bride appeared. Naturally, Ennisley was constrained in the presence of the man whose persistent opposition had been the obstacle to his schemes for Rand's mills looking to their evolution as a model industrial establishment. The conversation, despite Stephen Rand's considerateness, soon transcended the amicable relations of fellow guests, for Mr. Hayes' patience was small. He had the smallness of the middle-class mind against the modernistic spirit of the universities; Doctor Ennisley was the embodiment of this traitorous unrest, social, economic, spiritual, which had seized "the masses," a favorite phrase of this one-time clerk in a Buffalo dry-goods house who had married a dressmaker's assistant of New Jersey before the war came to give the self-made an exceptional opportunity.

"And now the thing's done," he concluded a lengthy and fervid setting-forth of the situation at Rand's mills—"now the bomb's thrown, it's the cue for all the college socialists and preachers with their maudlin sympathy for the shiftless and incapables

to run to cover. These men who, in the magazines and in their lectures, have made a trade and reputation by questioning the solid interests of America, who have overturned the confidence of investors and aroused the suspicions of the masses—now, that all their yawp has borne fruit in anarchy, they run to cover!"

The old justice was silent. Beneath his grim quality lay a fineness of courtesy, a many-sided capacity; he had, moreover, felt a weakness in his position as an interpreter of organic law and as a partisan in the social cleavage which his industrial interests forced to his attention. It had been this consciousness of issues and his personal nearness to them that had led him to harbor Doctor Ennisley's heresies, which now rebuked him, as they had tried his patience the past year. He looked across the board at Ennisley, silent and constrained, before the indictment.

"And if this is what the colleges teach," went on the self-made, "then down with the colleges—if this is what the paid professors advocate, bridle them. Yes, make them directly responsible for the outlawry they bring about!"

Ennisley spoke in the junior partner's pause: "Hayes, have you thought out clearly what you're saying?"

"I know this," retorted the other, glad at the chance to fasten his generalities home, "that before you were allowed to come to Randsville and meddle

with your settlement among the hands, and to agitate shorter hours, state inspection, weave-room ventilation, model cottages, and so on, there never had been a strike in that district. And I know that ever since there has been friction, discontent, and now riots—anarchy—murder."

"Yes; discontent with ignorance, with wrong to the children—a hideous and intolerable race wrong. Judge Rand knows what I've done in his mill-town. Ignorant, dirty, despised—the cracker whites from the hills, and the Polish emigrants the agents sent there by shiploads—yes, you are quite right, I preached discontent!"

"Class hate—revolution—treason to America—nothing less!"

Ennisley turned, his patience hardening, dangerously calm. "Better homes—a school—a chance at life. Yes, I've told them of other things that America might mean—the dawn of the new day, the higher man."

Hayes snorted: "And here under this roof—that is the incredible thing about it—under the roof of a justice of the supreme court, you have found a listener to your gospel of revolt!"

"Tut, man"—the old justice had listened with a grim irony—"this will not do—not do. I think, Doctor, we have been overzealous, we have gone far afield, and routed up strange game. The country to-day is looking at your radicalism with suspicious eyes. This affair down there has centered men's

eyes on you and your new school of thought. It is against the basic idea of America, you will admit."

"It is what he's taught in the college settlement down there to the scum of Europe; it is what he's preached at his assemblies and in his class-room; it is what he's been after in the legislatures, and through Congress. He has made this college, founded by you, Judge Rand, to stand out as the hotbed of rabid thought. He's only one of a nest of professors there who's stood forth to the country in this light. All this in the school that owes its very existence to you, Judge Rand—here, under your very roof was bred this attack on law, society."

"Hayes, my friend, will you be calm? This is no way to approach the matter. The laws stand—they will protect and punish."

"Yes, now the thing's done—anarchy in the mills."

The old judge sighed; he had been sore beset of late; he had borne the secret brunt of Corbett Ennisley's brilliant forays many times from his associates on bench and in his associations with men; he had felt himself more than patient.

"It's well enough to have the country understand the matter," went on the superintendent; "to have it clear that the bomb that killed five policemen was thrown from the steps of the settlement in shanty-town where this revolutionary teaching had gone on among the foreigners by a group of college men—Americans, whom they knew as men of note. You

can't get away from it that the police charged this building to break up a riotous demonstration and from the inside a bomb was hurled from among the sort of scum who had been gathered there to be uplifted"—he threw all of his ponderous contempt into the phrasing—"enlightened—bah!"

The college settlement's founder was silent for a time. "I would like to have been there," he said. "It is hard to believe that my boys—that such a thing is possible."

"Possible? The police know of secret meetings there—of a fellow from Newark—an out-and-out anarchist—who harangued the mill-hands night after night in the basement of your building, in the very room you used to talk in. I wish to God the country knew all this—that it had come to light!"

"I taught nothing of that—knew nothing. I urged the unionizing of the hands, yes. I told the yardmen to help the girl workers organize. I put the night school on its feet to give them an outlet—a hope—"

"You openly preached socialism," retorted Hayes, "the chief has statements from a dozen boys of the sort of things you said."

The justice stirred; he turned to his protégé quietly, but with a serious and ominous tolerance: "Doctor, is this true? Socialism? You preached this to them—these ignorant mill-hands?"

"I told them of a better day, a social dawn to come. Yes." Corbett rose—the dinner had been

finished. "I held forth to them a hope—a dream of what America would mean to their children—"

"And then you ran off back to Chicago, while your dupes threw a bomb for this hope—this *dream.*"

"Hayes, I decline to listen." The social worker was pale, resolute; he went from them with dignity. The judge's voice detained him at the door; he turned, his fine young-bearded profile against the shade. The frail old man at the head of the table raised his hand.

"A moment, Doctor. You did not lend your settlement house to these meetings knowingly? You knew of no violent measures—the attack on the mill gates, Doctor?"

The doctor threw back his shoulders with a sort of despair. "Judge Rand, can you ask that? Do I need answer that?"

The old man watched him curiously; he nodded, his ghost of a hard smile came back. "I trust in you, sir. I believe you."

The younger man went from them. It seemed to John Bride, sitting mute, expectant, intent to the matter, that there was a haunted pathos in his face. The old Scot nodded cannily.

"He is over-impatient, but right, Stephen. He believes greatly, and those are seldom patient. He would like to prick us on over-fast wi' his millenniums, when every mon will have the worth o' his wage and a tight roof o' his bairns' heads."

"John Bride," the justice muttered, "when you put through the northwestern division you heard little of this socialistic clatter—every man worth his wage got it."

"That's it," the junior partner added, triumphant that he seemed to overbear the field, "and there are those to-day not worth it but who are equal to demanding that better men shall give up the reward of their efforts; that we shall share with them the earnings of our accumulations—the rights that God in His wisdom placed in our hands—"

John Bride laughed softly: "God must have a sense of humor, man, or He'd not have made so many queerish people. I'm thinking oft enough of these rewards and rights. Hayes, man, what is there about ye that deserves reward? What great gift have ye brought to men for their reward and praise?"

"John Bride," put in the judge, "you are as addled as any of them. You have never been able to distinguish rights and duties."

"There is little enough—little enough—a mon can easily confuse them. He'll not have time to quarrel about the rights if he can fill the duties." John kept his keen eyes on the superintendent—"Aye, nor fear for his rewards until he's measured his service. The men we buried along the right-o'-way in the sixties wi' fever and the Indians' bullets were never red-necked over their rewards and profits, but the road was built upon them."

"We will not stir you, John," Stephen retorted. "We've had enough of this for dinner. I can beat you again at billiards to-night."

They went, presently, from the dining-room with its somber furnishings and dreary windows to the billiard hall but little better lighted, for the old judge would have none of electricity nor modern fixtures. Hayes excused himself while they were chalking cues and badgering each other, two old dodderers now dinner-full. The junior partner had business, and was, moreover, glad of escape. He had not found the proprietor of Rand's mills wrought to the heat he had wished to discover; he had again come upon, beneath Stephen Rand's grim outward aspect of the law's unbending, the tolerating patience of the greater man.

John Bride was idly knocking the red ball about when Stephen came back from the hall where he had seen the other out.

"He is fair worked up," John had it, "between him and the professor they will drown human kindness. I am glad I have no mill to quarrel a profit out of, nor a doctrine to expound about it. I will stick to my flag and let the auld beast thunder up the road."

"I wish I could hang half the worry on you," retorted his cousin. "The mills—things have come to an evil pass. I need a strong hand down there these times, John—a strong man's hand—and I am getting old. I am thinking of resigning from the bench.

There's been much to trouble me of late years; and it seems we belong to a passing order. This is not the America you came to in the fifties, John Bride, or that my line has fought for since Ticonderoga."

"Ye may well say. It is mightier, more wonderfu', man. And it is comin' to more marvels yet than we can see!"

But the old judge shook his head. "Strong men are needed," he answered, "and there seems none. The old stock of the Saxon is dying. My line itself, John—what is it? It was the best, the elder blood—and what has it come to? You know—you have the answer down at your place, to-night."

Brother John was sighting along the green cloth under the lamp. "I will spot ye ten and beat ye, Stephen. . . . And Herford—I think he's tamed a bit—that in the heart of the fool, he's sorry. . . . I can give ye fifteen points and wallop ye. . . . There might be much to say for the waster, Stephen, him wi' his mother's trick o' eye . . . and if ye insist, I'll mark twenty on ye'r string, for ye have no chance wi' me. . . . An' only son, Stephie, and ye'r own; I'd give him a bit o' chance. . . . I'll spot up half the string for ye, and ye may as well sit down and let me play it. . . . Stephie, it's not a fine thing for a mon to sleep wi' his own blood barred from his door for deeferances fifteen years past. . . . Watch me make this three-cushion, man! I'm not interferin', Stephen, but why

don't ye face him man to man and see what good the garrulous fool has left in him?"

"There are two fools of you down there, though one's not a scoundrel like the other," retorted the justice; and then his unpitying tolerance spoke its brief authority. "Send Rand here, then. He can have his rooms, he can eat at my table—and be damned with him. I will not speak to him, or communicate with him except when I choose. And he'll not overbear me with his insanities. But bring him to dine with you the next time. It will test him, and show what I can endure . . . And you missed your shot, John—never tell me this wigwagging foolishness has not stiffened your joints!"

"Go on, man, the game's anybody's! I was just a bit startled."

CHAPTER VIII

FROM the dining-room Doctor Ennisley went up the stairs to the hall leading to his apartments. At the turn by the great windows, there was one brief glimpse of the lake, black beneath the overcast sky, the wide, clean avenue stretching south and north with its double lines of lights. The wind was rising with a lonely stealth. It stirred the naked trees touching the gables, and the syringa and lilac bushes beyond in the streak of light which fell out on the lawn from the billiard-room. The upper portion of the house lay in its usual noiseless melancholy, and to the soul of the watcher from the window this presently crept, adding to his doubts. He was a sort on whom the weight of the hours rested heavily when the flame of his ardors burned low; their splendors were touched with the oblique shadows, the sadness of reality. There was so much to do, so much misunderstanding, bitterness, hate! One needed the crusader's immolating fervor and a giant's strength; Corbett wondered, at his moments of depression, how he had the audacity to stand in the fore of the new fighting line, what mystic spirit held him on? He had denied it to be ambition, the

solace the great years were bringing for his early eager and starving life. He knew now that he was the national figure in the child labor reform movement; there were others doing more substantial work, but he was the brilliant figure, caustic, daring, whipping up the lagging conscience of the land. He could afford to be hated, reviled while he was winning exultantly. But it came to him oddly that he really was a far different man, a student with an indrawing reserve, a soul that clung to the simplicity of home-making ways. He had morbid forebodings of himself in the great crises of men's lives; already he felt the mighty current carrying him on to the deeps; he knew he was drifting to ever wider circles—already he was the iconoclast of creeds that had nurtured him; he was claimed by the ebullient humors of every school of thought: more—he was beloved.

"Yes, that man—Ennisley," Altmayer, the tireless propagandist of the active socialists, the father of the national party, had said when reference had been made to the cotton mill agitator's spectacular lobbyings and his invective writings, "let him be. We don't need him in our party—and he's doing bigger work for us outside, reaching people who'd be scared off if he came to them as an active socialist. He's doing our work—he's making 'em squirm —Ennisley's all right as he is."

Ennisley had heard with some confusion; he had realized then, his acute position; he was on the crest

of a wave he had created, taking him he knew not where, only, to-day, he was tasting the sweetness of power, the exultance of victorious youth—his life full, potential. It was an honest vanity, surely, that would let a man take measure of himself as the forefront figure of his cause. Now, after the hour of his trial, facing Stephen Rand's questions, the man to whom he owed all, whose sufferance had made him what he was and was giving him his chance beyond, the peace and power of his imaginings came back. He looked out to the heart of the town to the south, and it seemed as if the spirit of its labor and achievement, its undershift of hopes, obscure destinies, beckoned; its army of toilers with a mighty onward shouting beheld him and were heartened. Yes, he was the man to do, the figure for a consecration, Christ's brotherhood to men. Some day he would preach that, too; for he was, at heart, essentially religious. He would find the human Christ as a symbol for the great war of the beaten and the oppressed.

So it was presently, in a renewal of his faiths that he went on to the rooms. It was a man's work, the only thing worth while—the lifting of the race type—he knew the largeness of his vision. He told himself that he would go South at once and resolutely face this affair at Rand's mills. After all, it was only incidental; he would refute it, clear his name and press on. Stephen Rand, the chief owner, whom he had led curiously on this way, had not lost faith

in him, and he would go prove himself blameless, his lofty cause innocent of this bloody affair.

In the cheery living-room across from his wife's reading-table where she sat, he came upon Rand, the younger, sprawled along the divan—huge, unstirred, his round face with its odd mingling of grossness and asceticism, watching her. He did not even look up at the husband's coming.

And then, at Corbett's surprised greeting, he turned with a ghost of ironic courtesy.

"You must have come by the side entrance?" queried the doctor, with a show of hospitable interest, "there was no announcement."

"I did. I can stand only so much of John Bride's certitudes and moralities—and I can endure silence not at all. And so I chose to come here, and sit by your fire. It's to be a rough night, man."

His eyes were on them both and about the room in the inutile hunger of the homeless—and then, to them came his loquacious malice: "A fire to sit by from the wet; to eat and drink, and then lie by to debate the matter."

The wife had looked up with a trifle of consciousness in her composure when Corbett came in; she felt now sure of herself: "And you surely are an appetizer after so much of the doctor's frantic goodness!"

The husband laughed with her briefly. To-night he would have had his work heartened by an intimate appreciation. Demetra's careless mood stilled him.

"How's little mother?" he went on, "and Tad? It's after nine, and mother's in bed, of course."

"An hour ago. And the nurse is with the boy—he's better to-night."

The young father had thought that always it was the nurse who was with his motherless boy, ill or well; that always, in the quiet room beyond, Jessie's child was tucked away with the nurse girl reading; while without, in that irradiation of her softness, sat his wife. She was always amused, friendly, interesting—complete. He turned aside. He had thought of calling up Louise to ask of the last lecture she was transcribing as he had shot it off last week; he would have liked her voice over the telephone; he fancied her understanding him with only a word of eager inquiry to her. She had that about her, to know his moods, his failures and his resolves.

The wife sought him curiously as he looked through the rooms to the study light beyond.

"*She's* coming—at a quarter past—" she said, and looking quickly up, he caught her idle smile. It stung him with complex significances; he stammered confusedly, he knew not at what. The other man's eyes were on him.

"Yes, perhaps," the doctor answered. "There's some work to do—that address before the Social Equality Club Monday night—I've been so hurried, and Miss Hergov has been helping on the thing." He did not usually so address her. She had been "Louise" always with a frank fine camaraderie to

his wife, his associates and all the world, never his tribute to her worth withheld.

The wife went on with good-humored interest: "You've seen Mr. Hayes at dinner? He had some news of this—those dynamiters?" She had quite recovered from her first dismay—the thing seemed passing.

"Yes. It seems that the police have all the men in the plot except one. A fellow from Newark—a proclaimed anarchist—started all the trouble. He got my boys into it. Yes, they arrested some of them. Old Sonska, the gate-man, and that Peter, and two others from Number Two mill—that curly-headed little chap you remember? Peter? They were all Poles—all ignorant, alien—they fell easily before that blatant cur. I'm starting South to-morrow night. I'll see into this."

She murmured indifferently; she had a vague memory of the two weeks she had been at the mills with him last fall. They had repelled her with their roaring, the sordid clatter, the gray walls over the thin soil of northern Alabama. A dank sun rising over the pine lands always on this squalid picture, the mills, the gaunt red earth, the naked village pouring each morning its dirty stream up the dusty road to the mills and swallowing it again. She had spent the time motoring along the river with the wife of the resident superintendent, while Corbett and his secretary had been busied at starting the settlement in the new wooden hall Judge Rand

had built for this experiment, grimly cynical but not denying.

"You saw what the *Chronicle* said?" the wife went on. "It denounced your *meddling*—it called you an unsafe agitator—"

He laughed briefly; before he had not minded attack. "O, well, my dear, nothing can stop because of that! We know who owns the *Chronicle!* I wonder if Louise is coming? It's late—and a bad night." He went to the window and then stopped to slip open the door to his child's chamber. The two that sat without heard him murmur, he went in the room and was kneeling at the bed—he lifted the tiny shrunken form—they heard the boy's sleepy mutter.

Rand watched. His garrulity was sunk in a study—the wife, the quiet room, the chamber beyond, the lamp-glow, the young father kneeling. His gray eyes noted curiously—what was the texture of this life, its cloaking of naked wounds? What was the other man finding here, and to which he stood alien? Corbett came back to them. It was as if with his child's warm breath he had drunk strength for a man's facing of his fight; there was more here, indeed, than the easy virtue of the married who have bought their flesh and look askance at the unattached. He had come back with shining eyes; it seemed that whatever had held its shadow between him and the spirit of his work had now been precipitated, and he could go on seeing in his

old faiths. He was never given long to despond, the merest trick of sentiment would raise him.

"O, it's good to get back here," he cried, and looked even on Rand with his ardent laugh, "it heartens a man for the tough old fight! And a man must go on—nothing can stand still. When you come to think of it, it's wonderful, this era we're in—making the way clear. There'll be a race to evolve its own philosophies and moralities—" it was like him to dismiss airily what other minds would stumble at lifelong—"we are the rough workers far before the better man."

The other's humor rose. "The man to come—the devil take him! We owe him nothing. I do not need philosophies, nor hopes, nor fears, merely something to fill my mechanism of a stomach and breed a mind to look about with."

"I think you've been at Stirner and some of those doleful madmen of Germans," retorted the other. But his flow was checked—his working ideality, youthful, simple, ennobling his world, holding to the need of new interpretations for the spiritual as well as the common conserving of mankind, had no note of the acrid spirit of another departure from authority; his was the iconoclasm of the crusader, and not the super-man. He had been troubled at a touch of this in Louise—he had gone grudgingly from the faiths of his home-keeping youth, he had not given the full measure to reason or enlargement. His eyes were now upon his wife, placid over her

stitching. It seemed that she had been the last milestone of his slow renouncement of his mother's simple orthodoxy. It was a huge, hard, brilliant world to which he had come, and it accepted nothing but the proved. "I think," he went on slowly, "a God's behind it all—that after the final evolution the race will come to sit with decent manners and faces clean at the Father's table. And now the thing is to clear the way, to make the human mood receptive. Human love will show the light as we need."

The wife listened inconsequentially; she had her old composure to each of them. Rand's retort came: "Love is a physiological device to keep the scheme running. A trick of nature to keep men interested in it. I think, however, that the curiosity of woman would have her tampering with it always, instinct or no instinct."

And the wife laughed with her indolent uncaring. Rand turned to her: "Eh?—is it not so?"

"Really," she answered, "I heard little of what you were saying—you both bore me so!"

He looked at her and gravely broke the lie in her brief glance. The husband turned from the window, he sighed:

"You're strange. One wonders what you'll come to. Sometimes it seems as if all the possibilities were in you—you, an anarchist of the soul!" He paused; the idealizing sympathy of his own nature flashed out, he was in a noble pity for the other.

"There's something I will tell you. I think there's a chance that your father will forgive you."

"Yes?"

"He's aging fast. He called me to his room the other night. He thinks he's not long to live. Rand, he spoke of you—he called you 'son.' I had never heard that on his lips before."

The renegade's unstirred face did not move from its contemplation of the wife's white hands.

"I've wondered at you," the doctor went on. "It seems so much depends on you. O, there's much a man might do! Money could do marvels—yes, you're right—a magician! I think sometimes that on mere wealth men will found their brotherhood, their gentleness, their human love will come to be the very essence of materialism—of reason."

"Eh?—the brotherhood—Doctor, that is your greatest thing in the world!"

"I told you I'd given my life to it."

"Eh, you have not lived. You have stood all the time without, like a boy staring over a wall he can not climb, to the fruit beyond."

The doctor turned away to watch from the dark window. Between him and the others the gulf lay impassable; his mind dimly groped along it—the huge man sunken in the chair, gross, uncaring, the wife across the table. The need of work, of mighty faiths, ardors crying to the skies was in him—that was life—its worth, its ecstasy.

But they—they stood far off, beholding curiously.

And in the stillness the bell at the side entrance rang. He heard it in his dream, and did not move at first. Then he muttered, and they heard him:

"It's Louise. Almost ten, and Louise did not forget!"

He went in a sort of joy; swiftly, as if with the opening of the door to her, he would find his life. It would come glad, clean, unwearied. He opened the door from the hall, her name on his lips.

Louise was there. Beyond her in the gloom, a form, a shadow flitting to skulk by her side, a face staring at him, white, uncertain.

CHAPTER IX

HE greeted her; he asked her in, and yet through its casualness there was fear on him that he could not explain. The oncoming spring rain pattered the boards; beyond the open door the swathing night seemed pressing in on him, and this crouching shape by Louise's side centered the menace of the dark to his mind.

"Louise," he began, striving against his falter, "who—"

"Be still," she said, "this man wants to speak to you. He came to me at the office. He had a card you'd given him—your name and address."

"Yes?" Corbett answered curiously. He could make nothing of the shape, beyond its white face and staring eyes. And as he stepped closer, and as the girl was lifting her veil to speak again, like the dash of an animal the man was past her and in the hall. The doctor turned. Rand and the wife could see them, her husband's profile inquiringly lifted, and the black hulk of the intruder. The blur of the dim lights was on them, and then on the girl as she stepped within, closing her umbrella.

"He said he must come to you," Louise went on —"he could not wait—he must be taken to you."

The figure straightened with a sound like a yelp; it seemed that of a shrunken boy, dressed in clothes grotesquely large, raising a hand to part the long straight black hair from his brow to watch the doctor—a thin face, grimed but with a pallor that nothing could hide, the color of a wall of whitewashed deadness in the shade. "Doctor, my friend—I come!"

The other man stared back at the brilliant eyes fixing him. They made one think of a rat, cornered, half-drowned in a trap. The fugitive went on, his lips trembling with their eagerness, their need—you would have said—their joy, their trust and hope:

"Doctor—I come—my friend. Za blow iss struck!"

He had an inimitable accent, which, with his agitation, made his speech a thing not to be understood on first hearing. Louise, indeed, did not comprehend. The boy fled nearer the man, his thin hand again parting his hair, his shrill voice faster, faster.

"Novak, Frietmann—all tose boys say I must come North—tey gave me money . . . tey sait you—you would save me—Doctor, my friend!"

With a gesture, humbling, eager, enticing, like a woman coming to a man after she has been beaten, he reached for the other's hand, coat, anything to touch.

And Ennisley now whirled back from him with his long-pent cry:

"Karasac! You—here—" his voice went to a

whisper— "you mean?—" it sank lower, a mere tremor of articulation— "you were one of *them!* You threw the bomb?"

The air of the little hall had died for him. He had no need to breathe—a man poised on an abyss into which a touch would cast him.

The stranger sped under his upraised hand; he flung back the coat, showing beneath an arm rough-bandaged, the blood dried, streaked, smeared.

"Engel wass wit me—the comrade from New York. He told us liberty—a blow for the brotherhood—for all tose for vat a man could die! Yess —I—the blow iss struck!"

The mill-hand raised himself in a sort of pride —his thin rat face lit. His acrid whisper came: "I wass not afraid. I remember all you told me."

The professor turned away. His tense eyes fell upon Louise standing quietly by the door. Now, with a resolute authority, as if to close out the world from his tragedy, she closed it. In the stillness they heard the rain new falling; the street lamps afar off struck through the little diamond panes of dark red and Prussian blue in the old leadings about the entrance and made livid patches on their faces. The girl locked the door; she turned to them. She had, by one of those instant and inexplicable assumptions of the clear mind in crises, taken the mastery. She acted; she drew the curtains, she looked up with a keen aggression at the two beyond in the living-room. The wife had risen; she was

listening curiously. Rand had come on, he was at the door, his hand to the frame. Without speech, without movement, the affair in the hall in pantomime had surcharged them with its significance. And all this Louise at once divined—that each of the five within voice knew as if a prologue had been played in the fifty seconds since the dynamiter had entered—the dim light, the figures without motion.

"It's this," she said, as though to sum up at once a problem long debated, as if finality had put it past discussion. "This man has come from Rand's mills to Doctor Ennisley—a bomb-thrower seeking protection."

It seemed as if, with the words, Ennisley came from his stupor. He turned to Rand, touching his sleeve. "You see, don't you?" His voice shook. "He's a mill-boy whom I taught in the settlement. I tried to raise him—help him . . . and now—" His voice broke— "Good God, he comes to *me!*"

"He comes to you." Rand's voice had no inquiry; it but stamped the logic of what had gone.

The Pole lifted his coat, eagerly he turned from one man to the other, as if surely they could not doubt: "I am hurt, Doctor. The bomb went too soon. But I got away. Tey put me in a freight car dat night. Novak, he say, Chicago . . . the doctor, he shall help you—he tell us all so much. And all last night I went about and my arm hurt. And at last a Pole boy he tell me—I show the card you gif me."

The thing was in Louise's fingers; she tore it slowly up. The Pole was going on with his curiously mechanical, yet eager recital, an even staccato, as one on whom the power of impress could stamp no further, as one beggared by plunging events, awhirl and past the consciousness of surprise. "I could think of only you. To come to you, Doctor, my friend—brother."

Ennisley had turned again to Rand. "A boy of the mills—an ignorant Polish boy, brought up in the weave rooms—a night worker. Rand, you see, don't you? You see I had nothing to do with this anarchy—nothing . . . and that it's ruin to have him here—even to have it known that I taught him. Ruin—the wreck of everything!"

"My brother—that's what Engel sait. Liberty we wass to fight for in America. You told us, Doctor, it wass to struggle. We wass all brothers!"

The scholar fell back from his brother's groping: "You see this?" he repeated— "a mill-boy—a student at the settlement. And this, now—he must not know me—be seen with me. All I'd hoped to do —everything—" His whispered appeal sank lower to the other, "You see, don't you?"

Rand's voice had the music of a bell: "He's come to you—a friend."

"Yes, I know." He turned away wearily, and then started as if from the shadowy hall mocking faces listened—he had heard the slur of a silk gown; his wife had come and was in the door, the

light subduing her September richness, the burnish of her light hair merely showing.

"Corbett," she said, "is this all true?"

And before he answered, while he was nodding his assent, Louise spoke quietly. Before the wife who had dominated her always with her complete assumption of place and tribute, she had still her calm.

"You'd better go." She laid her hand on Ennisley's sleeve, the touch urging him toward the door of his study. "You can do nothing—you can not even be seen with him. The servants may come—the nurse or Bullock—and this is Rand's house—a justice of the supreme court. This anarchist came *here*—to see you. You dare not be *seen* with him!"

And as he stood, blankly staring at her, she pulled at his coat: "Come."

He went on slowly. Once he turned and cried back: "Demetra! You see I knew nothing—did nothing! The whisper of it would be ruin for us!"

"Come," the secretary repeated. "He shall be taken care of, but you must not be seen."

Rand's narrowing eyes were on them as she led him off—you would have said a broken man. As he went through the study door, she closed it and stood, facing out, as if a guard to him, his dreams, his life, their common shrine.

They had waited, the bomb-thrower in the snug window-corner by the turn of the stairs, hidden by shade, his bright eyes seeking to comprehend; Rand

in the middle of the hall, his arms folded; the wife by the door from the living-room, watching, startled.

"A mill-boy?" she said clearly, "to my husband?" She came on nearer, and in the light bent curiously to see him. And in the shadow rose a gasp, then a yell; he had leaped out in a frenzy, and was before her.

"Wife?—*hees!*" He stared up at her, his coat half off, his broken arm swaying in its bandages. "I know you—he sait—*Demetra!* I remember! Look at me—Karasac!"

She stood unbelieving; she whispered the name and stood still.

"Ludovic—Karasac!" the Pole went on. "Brother —and you—tey named you—Demetra!"

The wife stood stunned. She did not even notice Rand's approach. And after a while, her eyes shifting from Karasac to him, she said faintly: "Ludovic. I remember." And then she whispered, as if greedy with her thoughts, as if sucking them dry, trying to moisten her lips the while in her obsession:

"Ludovic . . . yes, I remember!"

They looked on each other, the wife in her superb strength—fed, clothed, against the backing of the room's faded richness; the brother, lean, white, harassed with broken speech, dirty, alien—the beast-man. Suddenly she cried out in Polish, a single word.

He answered. She went on rapidly, the tongue

harsh under her hot delivery, fretting now and then under a forgotten phrase, and then lashing on, while he at times tried to retort to her outpouring. He lifted his hand, he protested, he snarled back, his voice raising, until Rand stepped to them.

"Speak English, I tell you," he said, and Louise added quietly: "Do not raise your voices. Be still —and speak English."

The wife turned on her; her anger blazed. Then she went on to Rand: "Yes, my brother. I know now, it is so!"

The Pole retorted bitterly, and then broke into his baffling English: "Eight years we been from Galicia—in the mills, a contractor brought us."

"The mills?" The wife shrank before him. "Here, tell me, my little brothers and sisters . . . Joseph?"

"Five years ago he died."

"Stanislaus?"

"He was killed in the machinery."

She spoke more faintly: "Little Marta?"

The brother came nearer; he had a cunning grin: "She was like you—too pretty. She wass in the mills and then she wass fourteen and the foreman, he—she went away like you to wear clothes and diamonds—rich, I suppose."

She reached to touch his arm; she lifted the bloody front of his coat, the rags of his shirt beneath, blackened, burned with powder, soiled with wearing and the bandages. "Joseph," she muttered,

"I know you Look at me!"

"Stanislaus; little Marta!" And then she turned to Rand, but as if unseeing: "In the mills—your mills! The mills Corbett fought for. . . . And I lived *here!* O, God!"

The anarchist stared from her to the man; then, exultantly, he leaped before him. "Rand? *Thees* Rand? The man we work for? And you—I see! He tek you from us, Demetra; he mek a lady to sing, wear fine clothes—*you!*"

"Be still," Rand said.

But the other woman was watching them, her eyes widening. The wife went on with her blind cry: "Yes, you took me, Rand. You sent me from them, children—babies, almost, then. And in the mills they broke them—your mills!" She writhed in a sort of hate, her glance from him to the other woman, who was still with the bigness of the revelation.

"Rand," the mill-hand cried, "go—hang me! Karasac—the anarchist—he kill—yass—hang him!"

Rand turned his heavy face unmoved from one to the other: "This is all true?" he muttered, his voice in no surprise; "Demetra, this is true?"

She nodded. "I can remember his face—my brother's face—a boy of eleven, but this is he, Ludovic!" And then she went on apathetically, now: "In this house—my brother, an anarchist—the police over all this land hunting him down. You see, don't you? I—Corbett—" And then her eyes followed Rand's own in a brief glance at

Louise Hergov. The secretary had come forward; pale, resolute, before the other impassioned woman. "You know, and you see, don't you? My husband —his work—his career—all—everything is on this. He must not know—Corbett must not know!"

"No," the other woman retorted seriously, as one deciding and as one against whom there was no appeal: "We shall save him without that! He must not know!"

Rand's eyes took a grim smile: "Ze lady," he mocked, "rich, beautiful—sister of Karasac, ze anarchist!" And then he went on gravely: "It is very good. But you dare not tell truth, eh? Well, then—what to do with him—the beast-brother?"

"He can not leave this house," the secretary said. "Free, he'd be found somewhere—he'd talk."

"Yes," the wife flashed out to Rand, "he must be hidden. It's ruin—you see, don't you?"

The mill-hand had stood from them, his rat eyes moving here, there, his mind gathering bit by bit from his understanding of their speeches.

"Hang me!" he broke out defiantly. "Karasac, brother to the rich woman. I know what they all zay—yass, hang me!"

"Be still," Rand threatened with arm upraised.

They saw that from the sick-room of the child Ennisley's mother had come. She was in her ill-kept old wrapper of gray calico; faded with smeared flowers; she had a glass and was looking along the mantel for something among the stuff there.

The wife pointed to the mother. "You see what it means, don't you?"

Louise turned to Rand's watching of the old woman. "See here—can't you hide him in the rooms you once had? They are never visited." She came to him in swift appeal. "Yes! Hide him!"

He considered her gravely. She had fought with her soul to hate him as a contamination. But now she laid a finger on his coat, and at his brief smile, the wife started.

"Now, here," Louise pleaded, "Doctor Ennisley—his good name, his work—you can save him—you must. You can hide this man—you must!"

And the wife repeated faintly, standing before them, beggared, shaken, watching the beast-brother: "Yes, he must not be seen—hide him!"

The brother stepped to her, he thrust a grimed, white face before her, leering, imbruted: "Demetra," he began and went on in their common tongue until she flashed out angrily, and he snarled back in his guttural speech. She seemed dazed, and Rand touched the brother's arm.

"Little one," he said, with some good nature, "you're not wanted, that's plain. By God, whoever fashioned you, they're anxious enough to tuck you out of sight!"

"Be still!" the wife retorted. "You know well enough he can't be seen."

Louise fixed him with her unflinching blue eyes. And from one to the other the beast-brother looked,

staring, uncertain. Rand's face took its sardonic grimace; he seemed enjoying the theatric cruelty of the situation. "Truth?" he said, "who dares face it? What a simple thing! To be kind, to be honest, to be unfearing—why, what is more reasonable? To give children what brings their laughter, and men what cleans their souls? What is greater? Is money? Or your damned reputations, or filled stomachs, or easy beds?" He turned to the mill-boy: "Beast-brother," he said in a rare friendliness, "within a week they shall perform miracles for you! Come with me."

The women saw them go up the stairs, their footfalls on the rugs and then sharply on the wood, and then die on the corridor. Then they faced each other, and after the moment, began to consider the thing in more reason.

CHAPTER X

THE wife said—after a brief study of the other woman, as one debating whether to brave the thing imperiously, or steal back stealthily, covering the defenseless places of her trail: "Louise, it seems that I must depend on you. You know, now; and it would be useless to do anything but be frank with you." And she went on, wondering if she appeared shaken to the other's eyes: "It's like a blow had fallen on us from the hand of God!"

"I don't think it is so bad," the secretary answered. She spoke clearly, with the gravity of the sure. "We can keep the matter still somehow. We can save him for his work—nothing else is important."

"I did not mean Corbett—my husband—" she was confused before this directness. "I told you much—that man, Rand, here. Surely you will understand. You've doubted me. I suppose all women doubt me. Well—" she went on, gathering her old command against the accusation of the other's silence— "it's of no importance, perhaps, but we are two foreign women here—we have come up different ways to what we've got in this America.

We ought to know each other—what we were to begin with and what we've fought to. And then you'd understand what it could mean to me . . . my brother coming on me, a mill-hand—his dirt, his ignorance—a criminal—a beast. And Rand—Herford Rand—I'd have to go back a long way to tell you all."

"I was thinking," said the girl, "of quite another thing. Doctor Ennisley—his place before the world—his good name, his work for others far beyond any such—problem." She hesitated, feeling again her old want of personality before the wife: "That is the only thing," she went on resolutely. "I am not concerned with anything else whatever."

"It's good of you," the wife hurried on, "I might have known, Louise. It's like you to think only of that—his work—his position. Yes, there's much depends on you."

But there lay still between them unspoken, the dissembling fear of women, the piteous loneliness in which they must go unappeased, watching each what the other possesses, or what they may despoil and flaunt to the beaten.

While they stood thus, returning a sort of commonplace murmur of reassurance to each other, Rand came with that peculiar swing and shift of his uncouth body that linked him back to the brutes which never grow gross enough to lose their dangerous primal quickness. He had been gone so

short a time that the wife exclaimed in apprehension:

"Why, you?—what have you done with him?"

"My rooms. They were locked. I went to Bullock and demanded the keys. Eh?—it was a strange sight—three apartments, locked, the blinds drawn, the very bed unstirred, papers scattered about the tables—the dust heaped over everything. It was a strange hate that made the man do that, to forbid a hand to touch them after he drove his cub of a preacher away."

The girl had looked at him with her usual intent. "We'd better think of something else. Here, under Judge Rand's roof, is this boy—hunted—"

"I think," retorted Rand, "he came for shelter—hungry, wounded, beaten." He turned to Demetra with his outthrust chin: "A brother. Yours—and Ennisley's."

"He's not," she cried, in a sort of freshly aroused savagery. "What have we to do with him—a mill-boy, ignorant—an animal—a fanatic—a criminal—a hunted beast?"

"A hunted beast—your brother."

She was stung, it seemed, by a brooding tenderness in his voice—an actor's trick to madden and outrage. "Will you be sane for once?" she cried. "I have waited, fought, longed for peace—rest. To win something—hold something! I came here, married, to sink down in the quiet of a home, forgetting everything, asking nothing—and now—now—this—"

"There comes to you, a brother. A hunted boy back to his friend, the prophet of the dawning brotherhood of man. Eh?—I think Ennisley called it that?"

He turned with his leer to Louise Hergov, pale, wide-eyed, watchful beyond the wife. "The brotherhood, I think he teaches?"

"Why will you torture her?" The secretary did not flinch from him. "You know well enough it is the end of things if it's known he's married to the sister of Karasac, who threw the bomb. You know the thing has shocked the country—that all the nation's watching him. Your father—a word from him alone—would ruin the work of his life."

"Truth?" he grimaced. "Can that ruin? What's greater?"

"Will you be a man for once?" the wife whipped out. "Our brother? Then he's yours. Your mills made him. My little brothers and sisters, aliens, brought here by a contractor—flung into your mills, crushed, degraded—Ludovic an anarchist! Well, who made him one?"

Rand leaned on one foot with a hand upraised, two fingers crossed, on his face the air of a connoisseur to whom had been propounded a delicate problem of virtuosity: "Let us think. Here are the mills; here your husband's teachings; here the law; here society. It is a pretty study—we will hold the beast-brother up and look clearly at him. I could dilate on it for hours—who made the beast?"

She stared at him in horror. And while he stood in his pose before them, the study door opened and Corbett came out. He had a paper in his hand, and nearer, he ran his fingers through his thick and curly hair with a nervous, decided manner.

"You put him away?" he began; "well, I have thought the matter out. There'll be a chance, if we can keep him hid a day or two, to dress him differently, disguise him somehow, and then give him enough money to keep still and get him off somewhere West." He finished and looked about on their silence. "Just to keep the boy hidden a day or so and then let him get away."

"I believe," answered Rand gravely, "he came to you for shelter—that he claimed you for a friend —that on you rests a life—let us say, a soul."

Ennisley threw up his hands: "Rand, be serious. If he's proved to be a pupil of mine, it's the end. I'm in a delicate position, man. If your father turned on me I'd have to leave the university, the child labor commission—a word from that crazed mill-boy breaks down everything." He turned to Rand in that ever-springing hope that nothing could daunt in him: "I may have been radical—hasty in speech —but I saw the newer social justice, the dawn of to-morrow. I never encouraged anarchy—violence —nothing!"

"Then, why fear? Fear is a thing to cackle at— it is a whip over the backs of fools. Why need a man crawl about under it?"

They looked at him again; the wife's lips moved presently. She went to Corbett's side. "That's like him—always the actor—the *poseur!* Corbett, you're ghastly! This thing is killing you."

He turned on her with swift gratefulness, his arm went about her in his eager pathos at each human note he could ever strike in this woman whom he never understood. "Dear heart," he said, "it's for you—you and my little Tad. A man has to come back to those things after all—his wife and child and home. Rand—what could he know? When a man's cornered he has to go back to the deeps of life—the very simple things. . . . My boy—how is he, Demetra? I want to see him—my boy."

"He's restless, I think. Your mother was up half an hour ago with him. Ellen's asleep."

"I wish you'd get him," the father muttered. "I suppose I'm confused by all this. I—I'd like to sit down quietly with you, Demetra, and my boy, and think it out and find my way." He caught at her in fervor. "Yes, I'm that kind—I have to go back to the simple things, dear heart." And he held her close, staring after Rand, who was departing with his usual abruptness.

When the man had gone, the girl, her pale face averted, seemed not to notice their caresses. "Dear heart," Corbett went on, "it touches me so—your suffering—for me! Nothing could matter if you cared, as I've hoped you'd care!"

For never had she seemed moved before by his

endearments. Yes, he had gone back to where the common strength of men comes, loving this woman with a persistent ideality. He was living a great moment and he knew it as only the sensitive soul may realize its crises. She seemed touched by his caress, and the world of his fighting hopes and failures fell from him in this splendor.

Then suddenly the wife flung herself from him and left the room for the lame child's chamber. He stood staring after, reaching his hands out in unthinking joy, and then his eyes fell on Louise by the study door. He was confused by his rapture; then it seemed the secretary was looking at him with a repression, a measuring second thought, a new light. The widening of her eyes seemed to chill him, as if, for the first time, he had failed in something; he stumbled in some pit of disloyalty. He would have spoken as he went after his wife, but the girl pointed and said merely: "Go!" and he went as if dismissed.

But through the night he could not forget Louise's look; as though he had lived a lie, or was now fooled by a lie, or perhaps both. And from some height she looked down upon him clearly.

CHAPTER XI

THE day that came was haunted for the wife. She went at nightfall from her secluded apartments in the wing of the house to the front of the great hall with its severe windows set about with little leaded panes, waiting, waiting, she knew not for what. About the day there was the ceaseless expectance, the disdain of death to the destinies of the living—it sheltered its tragedies with an evil decorum.

The place had ever oppressed her; she rarely came this far, and she seldom met Stephen Rand, for his eccentric seclusion did not invite approach. His dislike of lights, of change, the conforming of the aged servants, the memories of the closed rooms, lent each to the sinister aspect of the house, and Demetra, with her hatred of discomfort, avoided it. But here, to-night, she came upon the master, his hard face, like a Roman coin, age-stained, turned to her. She murmured of some errand to the housekeeper and of the lights.

"There are none beyond this hall," he said curtly, "none live beyond."

"Yes," she said steadily, "one could not live here and not feel that."

"Ghosts?" He smiled, the hard lips tightening—"We all see them at times."

The wife stirred with an unwonted pity for him: "You've suffered—one can feel that, too."

"I have put away the capacity. Mrs. Ennisley, I have been a hard man. Your husband, the mill superintendents, my associates in business and on the bench can not say they have seen much more. Life has been a truce with me—no more."

She was still in her surprise before this word from the Sphinx; in the three years of their acquaintance, since Corbett had brought her to his benefactor, Stephen had not spoken so far. She went on again in her feeling of compassion: "Judge Rand, you have been kindness itself—tolerance—patience—to us—my husband's affairs. We've been grateful."

"Of Doctor Ennisley's schemes? I was not thinking of them. They have been unfortunate enough, but I was not thinking of them. There has come here a man whose history you know something of, doubtless. I am a hard man, I may have been amiss—we both have a Scotch streak of Calvinistic stubbornness in us, but a fallen preacher is not to be endured. Madam, he made me lose my faith in God. I have had but one hate in my life and that was to my son."

She was stilled; ever since Rand's coming she had dissembled her insecurity; what the father knew of

his early life was to her a doubt. Now he went on: "He picked a woman from the streets of Vienna or London—I do not know who or where. I know only what the papers damned him with, and how he outraged the cloth when he was questioned. But—" the old man went on pithily: "he may have loved her."

"Loved her?" the wife whispered. "No—he loved nothing!"

"Eh?" Stephen peered at her. "He was of hot blood—it was for his dying mother's request I forced him to the ministry. I say, I may have been amiss there. But, however that, here he is to-day, a drifter, boasting that he's been sailor, tramp—the braggart, unredeeming—claiming a right of me. Eh, well—it seems to take me long to get at my point. I'm an old man and breaking fast. There'll be need of strong hands for my affairs and I have wanted to say: 'Lad, there's a place for you here—there's work for you . . . I will take you back.' And I see nothing but the swaggering impostor in him. I am feeling through the dark—if he would come a man—a *man*—to me—"she caught the trouble in his voice at last— "I believe, madam, you can help me."

He had held a hand to her; she saw him suddenly anew—a piteous figure, small, shrunk, bent in appeal —she knew how the thing had crushed him now. In an impulse she reached to his cold thin fingers; she heard the break of a voice—a father's voice and none of the justice.

"We can draw a human soul back from the pit," he went on, "I think we can, my dear. I'd rather die forgetting that I had cursed my own. I could pray to God again. Eh? I think you are one of these painfully scientific moderns as to faith—it seems there is an end to authority, but you can understand that in me—that I could pray once more, if I could undo this?"

"What can I do?" she murmured, confused the more as to his purpose.

"I've asked him back. John Bride will bring him Thursday to dine. And God help me, I do not know how to face him. I want you there—you and the doctor. I do not want any sick sentiment of a reconciliation. I had thought that in a company he might be received without outrage, or scene—Eh? Can you see—I wish to study the man—to accept him without surrender. Can you understand that?"

"Yes, and I shall come. And if I can help—the least thing—the most trifling thing one can do—"

He broke in on her with his smile that recalled the son's own:

"You are the first woman that I have appealed to for anything in quite forty years."

And then, with his curt and yet considerate manner of dismissal, he left her with that strange sense still on her that she had seen the hard man's soul opened to its depths. For the moment she had forgotten the coming of Karasac; that in Stephen's fingers lay all that she had won to. She saw nothing

but an old man, decrepit, clinging wretchedly to some impossible hope, hurrying from her to cover his beggared life.

In her rooms she came upon two men watching each other across the table, the glow of the light between—her husband and Rand, the younger. The wife's sense of danger, vague, yet acute, rose at Rand's enigmatic face, at Corbett's studied quiet. He rose to receive her. Rand, sunk as usual, his huge form filling the chair, nodded with slow indifference.

And the question that for twenty hours had burned in her brain came unconsciously to her lips: "He—still here?"

"I have the beast locked in the rooms. He has eaten and drunk—he is washed and his arm attended to."

"The servants?" she whispered, for the thing brought the leap of panic to her. "Food—you did not ask them for it?"

"I brought it from John Bride's. God help me—for the second time in twenty years I lied . . . or did I lie? I said it was to feed a dog. Eh—brother? The beast-brother—a mad dog cornered."

She shivered. He went on to her and to Corbett's staring silence: "You should have seen him eat—a dog, starved in the highway. He gulped it in a corner, watching me with his eyes that can hate as a hunted beast ought to hate. Eh?—I stayed an hour with him—watching. I fed him and at the end,

when I went to take the plate away, with some sort of a snarl he struck me."

"Struck you! Why that, Rand?" Corbett's voice was wondering.

"I hardly know. I merely put my hand on his shoulder. I called him brother—little beast-brother . . . he whirled and struck. See here?"

They saw now his temple bruised.

"Struck you?" the wife breathed hard: "You, a man three times his size. You—he struck—and *you?*"

"I went to fetch him water. He was starved for it. It seems it is turned off in that part of the house."

"Struck you?" she whispered. "He must have feared!"

"Fear? Yes—what else is left him except fear and hate?"

She could not sit before him; she rose to walk the room.

And after a while, because Corbett did not speak, and to live before Rand's silence was more intolerable than his talking, she went on hurriedly: "I can see that. That was like you—a play, a little drama you could act out—to have him strike you, and you go fetch water for him patiently. That was like you—to stand before him with a smile—with your conceit that you were beyond it all!"

"It was, in fact, admirable. It was complete and wholly done. The beast was dumb after that

—in horror at me. He has not soul enough to see there was an approach to greatness in it. He strikes me; I smile—I bring him water—I say, kindlier than before: 'Little brother!' "

The wife flashed out: "You call it great! You say it's fine—*you!*"

"There may be finer things than to put your hand out to a brother in the dark, hated, trapped, to bring him water and to bind his wounds, but I do not know of them. Think of it now: He curses me—I smile. He strikes me, and I say, more gently: 'Little brother!' I put a hand out to caress his wound. Eh? —you should have seen him then, sit back, his great round eyes staring!"

The doctor muttered, rose and walked the room's length to look from the window. His wife turned burning eyes upon the outcast.

"Rand, my husband's been at a man's work, too. He's given himself to the children in your mills."

"I understand he's done that arch-crime in America—he's hurt dividends."

She turned away. "Enough of this. Here's this boy—he must be got away."

"Away? he's just come! Running with his little patter of liberty, fraternity—brotherhood—back to the hand that lifted him!" He came nearer, his deep voice to her ear alone, his smile upon her: "A brother!"

"Be still," she whispered, her eyes on Corbett up the room, "you shall not tell him that!"

He went on, ignoring her, his eyes, too, on the doctor. "Do you call him brother?"

"I tell you stop!" the wife cried, and the husband turned in amazement.

"Dear heart," he said, "what's this—how does it move you so?"

"Ah, well!" she breathed, "Rand scourges one so! And Rand's mills made the boy what he is, as God lives, they did! Yes, you—and all America!"

They faced her wonderingly, she who had been the clean cat by the fire. And from this miracle, Corbett turned to Rand. "I see," he muttered, "you mean for me to admit the boy—accept him—protect him." He sighed: "That's like you, mere madness."

"You've taught, I think," Rand answered, "a brotherhood to come—your socialism. Well, then, where is its soul to be? Are we machines to grind and grind, and have our lives drop off behind us, tied and labeled? Eh—socialism? Where are its sacrifices? You can't expect men to die for a sack of potatoes!"

The teacher of the revolution turned away. From the window he saw the black lake, the streak of light over the city. Beyond, the broad land ran to the seas; it seemed that as a light above its majestic capitol, its destiny the hope of the beaten and the failed, his own life hung; the hope of it the hope of myriads to be. He turned at last from his vision; he came back to his power of reserve, the bigness of his imagined and indispensable place. "You are

the man who makes things hopeless," he said. "You are the spirit of the individualist, the outlaw, the survival—you belong back in another age. Yes, you are the man who makes for despair, who sits ruthless and unmoving—yes, a beast across the human road. Thank God that you can not hinder in the end—that the procession will crush you, throw you aside in the end!"

"But now I live. It is brief and sweet, but I live." He rose and appeared about to go, seeking for his gray and battered hat, turning his rough shirt collar about his neck. And, as in his way, without ceremony or dismissal, he was about to leave the door, the wife came swiftly to him.

"This—Karasac?" she said. "You leave him there alone? He—is it quite safe?"

"For him?"

"For him? I meant—if he should be captured—betrayed—he'd tell!"

"I think he would," Rand said gravely. "It would be most human."

She tried to still her fear, to steady her voice.

"Yes, be the actor—the preacher—the fool! Rand, it's like you. You know we're cornered—trapped!"

He bent to look in her eyes: "Let me see. Can a woman be great enough for this? Sometimes I've wondered at you, Demetra!"

The husband started sharply; the other man was near the door.

"Demetra!" Ennisley cried. "What's this?"

In the doorway Rand turned. They saw his gray priest's face twitch with humor or disdain: "I think," he muttered, "the temple is still empty."

Corbett watched him go, bewildered. "What does he mean? He used your name, *Demetra?* Is he crazy?"

"O, well! It's his actor's way—his love of posing. He's always been like that."

"Always? Demetra, how could *you* know?"

"I've heard of the man." She went on, composedly now: "Can't you understand?"

The doctor sat down, discouraged. "I can't make the man out."

"Ah, well—" she came to him impetuously now, with a resolute endeavor to change their thought. "Come, Corbett, how are things at the university —or—the mills—anything?" she went on irrelevantly.

"Dear, it's bad. Hayes is still here trying to poison the judge's mind against me—to destroy my influence for the mill reforms. And this boy here —this pupil of mine." He broke off; he was again a man haunted. He looked at her and cried out: "Demetra, are you in a trance? Good God, look at me!" he went to shake her arm; she came from her stupor: "Dear," he went on, laughing strangely, "what was the matter? Don't be so still."

"Still?" She started. "Was I?" And she tried to smile, but it seemed more a twist of some pity for them both. "I was thinking!"

"Well, you'd better not, dear. There'll be a way. I know you feel the thing. I myself have gone about all day in a dream. That boy hidden here—and my whole life hung by a straw. You—you haven't seen him, Demetra?"

She was on him quickly, as if he had stumbled on the truth. "Seen him? No, Corbett, we'd better not see him—not at all."

"Yes. It would be useless—dangerous. He's crazy—an anarchist, a murderer—no one knows what he would do if I failed to accept him."

"That's true," she watched him, wondering what faint ideal of his manhood seemed now fainter, whitening to nothing. "O, no," she roused up, "we can't see him—it would do no good—none!"

But with the thing between them they sat silent as one will sit in the wreck of a house after a storm, looking about at the semblance of familiar objects that can not again be made to stand upright, to have office, to give their old solace of association. "Let him be," the man said at last. "Let Rand go on with him. Yes, if it pleases him—this hollow greatness for the brother, as he calls him—the beast-brother."

"Yes," she repeated after him; "brother," and she tried to say the word again, but her lips seemed dry.

"I saw the evening papers," Corbett went on; "they were still filled with it—the children's war, one called it. And the *News* said that the principal

dynamiter was supposed to have reached Chicago." He took the hand from her lap and caressed it. "And they'd hang him if they caught him—the proof is clear against this one—the Polish boy, Karasac."

"And he's here," she muttered, "Karasac—he came to you—wounded—starving—Rand said, a rat. And Rand, he knows—"

"Demetra," he cried, "what do you mean? Your eyes so strange!"

She forced a laugh: "O, nothing—I'm silly. Of course we can't acknowledge him—see him. Of course not! It would compromise you for ever!"

"Yes. And I'm fighting the great fight, Demetra, not only for you and Tad, but beyond—the great love of the world, Demetra—the coming brotherhood of men, some day, beyond us all!"

"I've heard so much of it," she answered wearily.

"And you'll never quite understand, dear." He got up and looked at his watch. "I telephoned Louise to come this evening. I thought I'd pitch into work and try to forget. We're getting that address in shape which I'm going to deliver before the Social Equality Club—just an after-dinner thing, but I want it big. There'll be some men there I want to reach. I called it *The Brother Keeper.*"

"Yes—yes—" she answered, again in her indifference. "Go on—work—" Then she started: "There's Louise now—on the veranda. Go, let her in."

"Let her in? Why?" he asked curiously.

"She—you need her, Corbett."

While he looked at his wife, still amazed, the maid had let Miss Hergov into the hall. She went to the study opposite the open door of the living-room. The man and wife saw her by the familiar desk, her blue, close-fitting gown about her slender form, a form yet full, vibrant, a steel in spring; her coarse black hair suggesting a race close to some primal untaint of life. The wife's glance snapped to his. He was watching the girl and his own trouble seemed to have lightened.

"Yes," he began, "she's so clear, so sane. A woman like that can do so much—" his hand went to his tired eyes— "she seems to feel in advance for me—she can hold a man to his best—his ideals—his greatness."

The wife endured patiently—she knew the rote of this; knew, too, its honesty.

"To be great, Corbett? I suppose a woman can send a man on to that, or drag him down—is that it? She can be clean, warm, a mere weight on him—a cat content to sit by the fire, too—can't she?"

"What?" he put in quickly. "Rand said something like that—he mocks at all women. He has made even Louise hate him in the three days he's been here—"

"Has he? How do you know—" she clutched his arm— "has he?"

"O, let's be through with Rand," the husband cried; "everything comes back to him—his spirit sits

on this house and every one in it. I'm sick with it all. The way he's slipped in on this matter—his power over us. And it's on you, Demetra—you're sick with it—he's moved you so with his eternal playing and his gibing."

"Yes, he has," she said apathetically; but she walked away from him, stinging her hands one upon the other with cruel little beats, her eyes hard. Yes, he was playing on her and beyond the husband's power to fathom—the range of her soul, its depths and greatnesses, before untouched—her life a harp to which he reached his idle fingers.

When she looked about, Corbett had gone to the study and was speaking to the girl, sorting his papers with well-remembered motions. And when he had sat, with Louise at her place before the machine, her note-book in her hand, he began dictating, the familiar singsong of his voice but little changed, it seemed, from any other night in his busy life; the girl's silent faithfulness, and the wife beyond idling in the warm room.

But once she saw him glance, with a start, over his shoulder, and then go on; and presently she herself whirled in a nervous expectance, to look about her at the quiet room. The clock, a solid ball of glass with the dial showing crystal clear, was ticking—the only sound. But she wondered at his start and hers; a presence in the still house haunting them.

CHAPTER XII

SO, in the comforting intimacy of his study, they were at their accustomed places, the secretary in her small chair a little lower than his, as if, at the feet of the master, she sat to learn and serve. The friendly cases, the walls, the table with its scuffed green cloth showing through heaps of manuscript, the scattered files, the closed door, the stillness—here a man could recreate his nobleness.

Miss Hergov was saying in her cool voice: "Mrs. Stratton of the Woman's Service Club telephoned to know if you could set a date for your address. They will make it at your convenience."

"I'd forgotten—" he mused a bit— "tell them the twenty-fifth. Let's see?—no." He pondered. "If I knew how this thing at Rand's mills was coming out. You see there are things I'd want to say—an attack I could deliver—that I can't, if—if—"

"Why should you fear?" she said intently.

He looked away from her clear gaze; he got up to pace the little den; he came back and sighed before her: "Ah, God—this thing's a nightmare! Everything comes back to it, Louise—all my life at every point—back to this—this pitiful mill-boy hidden here. . . . And Rand, he knows!"

"How can you be afraid? Go on."

"Those are Rand's words?" he had a curious query: "Why fear? How would the world look at it? How could we explain? I might prove myself clear as the stars of guilt for this anarchy, but the damage would be done, the public mind poisoned. Nothing could repair that."

She saw his bright, tired eyes on her, his hand troubledly in his tousled brown hair, like a boy perplexed.

He went on eagerly: "If the world could see it like you, Louise—the greater way. Yet, to-day, I can't understand you—something seems to have come up—you evade me. You have such truthful eyes, Louise, and they seem hurt—"

She did, indeed, evade him. Then she hurried on: "Never mind, you must go on. You can't renounce, nor give an inch—never!"

And he caught at this in his heart-hunger. He needed the strength of women, they had been his shield through all his fighting life. "Dear girl," he muttered: "how you understand! Yes, my work—your whole life's wrapped up in it. And I'll go on fighting—you keep a man to his best. You know it's not for myself at all!"

"I've never doubted that."

He was pathetic in his grasping for her praise. It seemed suddenly sweeter than his easy plaudits from the world. To be the hero to the one who knows you best—and Louise knew him best of all,

his enthusiasms, battles and defeats, his little vanities, and child's love of support, even his domestic truces and failures—she knew all, and he was conscious of it—to give his confidences to those about him was one of his charms of personality. And with it all she honored him—that was the greatest test—to honor him.

And as he sat in this great comforting faith in her—both now conscious, a little confused, evading each other directly, the door opened and his mother entered. She looked about in her habitual want of confidence in herself: "My boy, I am clean tuckered out readin' so. My glasses is outgrowed, I do believe. I just want to say to my boy, 'Good night.'"

He went to kiss her eagerly. She would never remain long in his study—it was a sort of miracle shop to her where he was working the magic fame and fortune, somehow or other. She was a bit fearsome of it all even in her pride.

"And Louise," she went on—"a girl workin' so late. Time a body was abed."

"Sit down, mother—we're not working yet." Corbett went on in his affectionate intent: "Louise and I get to discussing things and work goes smash!"

"You're a dretful slave," the mother chided in her fond way. He put his arm about her and drew her to him. "Little mother, if I could only break you of worrying about me!" He lifted her yellowed fingers which he could recall working on the buttonholes of the first pair of trousers he had owned:

"Dear girl," he said, "how you understand!"

"Louise," he cried gaily, "whatever can we do to make her feel at home here—to feel she belongs where I belong, and shares what I share? This big Chicago—it scares her—she saw it in the fifties when the cows were pastured across the river."

The pioneer mother laughed shyly: "It does beat all! The folks all rushin' and rarin'—it ain't Ioway Center, nor anywhere else in the whole government!"

Louise watched them, mother and son, in this joy of little things that made a home life she had never known—a one-time shop-girl, parentless, with memories of Kishenef. She could never quite grasp this mid-West mother nor Ennisley's simplicity of refuge.

He broke in with a burst of his old fire: "Chicago! It's wonderful! It's all America in the making! How it heartens a man and sends him on fighting—building—yes—dreaming, too!"

The mother looked her admiration: "And you gittin' to be such a great man!" she quavered triumphantly, "eatin' with the president, and I don't know what all!"

His deprecating, pleased laugh came; his buoyant spirit was already slipping past his trouble, finding courage in the day's work and his home's solace. With his wife he watched the mother go on her eternal puttering about the rooms, while Demetra stood by in her clean indifference. She had quite recovered, it seemed, and before her husband was

her usual tolerant, disengaged self, a burden he would carry gladly, life long, so strange is love, so eager to scourge itself, to wear chains, to go hungry, to go fetch for the scantiest meed.

"Eh, mother?" he mused, "she'll never change. She sits up for me now as she used to do when Archie and I were late getting home from some church ice-cream festival!"

The eyes of the two foreign women went to his fine, brown-bearded face dreaming back to his small town rearing—seeing Jessie home from the Methodist social, loitering on the drug-store corner or at the depot for the Sunday papers; all the charm of his mid-West American boyhood was about him yet. They, from their childhood memories of dirty villages and sodden fields, the sense of the peasant's hopelessness, the shop, the steerage, the night school, coming up to new freedom—from this they tried to bridge the gap to him.

Then, on their common reverie, came a stir. Rand had appeared from the shadows of the hall of the great house beyond. He stood gravely watching them; always, it seemed, he was coming on their privacy and complacence to prick some one on to outrage.

Corbett started impatiently: "I thought you'd gone?"

Rand came nearer: "Where?"

"Oh, I don't know! John Bride's—aren't you staying there?"

"My brother," he went on gravely, "was thirsty —I fetched him more water. His arm was bleeding—he hurt it striking me. I tied it with fresh bandages."

The wife looked at him in a terror that was part fury. The music of his voice cut Corbett as would an acid. And from one man to the other Louise looked with strange stealth.

The doctor fidgeted. "I'm trying to work, Rand. There's much to do. I—I want to forget this—to take my mind off—" his hand went to his eyes as if to banish a phantom— "work, a little," he muttered.

"The brother-beast," Rand gravely said, "is still, his wounds washed, and asleep. Work on, go your way in peace. Why fear?"

"Rand," the other man began, burning in some hope that seemed a degradation, "he's only a tool —a child crushed in the mills. I know his history since he was seven. A child brutalized—what could one expect?"

"Eh? What!" His eyes went to the wife with a smile that drew her fire, that played upon her as if, indeed, she were a harp in his hands. "What would one expect?"

"In your mills, Rand!" the wife cried, then rose with a mutter: "I'll not stay. You play on us—you've haunted this house—you're a devil moving through it! I'll not stay—I'll not listen!"

With that she burst from them, and the husband

stood pale, staring at the guest, confused at Demetra's passion, seeking light. At the door she turned with half a shriek: "Did you think we'd confess to him?"

"No. That is beyond you." He grimaced at them both. "That is given only to the fools, the martyrs and the Christs."

And they left the room, the husband and wife together, as if driven by a scourge. Rand sat down across from Miss Hergov with an air of some satisfaction and fell to scratching in his tobacco pocket.

"You know well enough Doctor Ennisley can not recognize this man," the secretary said. "He can help him get away, clothe him, give him money, but not receive him."

"Those are the least of his needs. He came crying out his soul to his brother. A faith, a dream —well, who put it there?"

She watched him, curiously stilled. "I wonder," she said, "what is behind your mask? Tell me!"

And because only his slow smile came, she rose and went before the gross hulk sunken in the chair and put her hand upon him. "Tell me," she repeated, "you're a puzzle."

"You do not seem to fear," he answered.

"Why fear?"

They were his own words—he listened with an odd shift of his unlit eyes. Then, as ever, out of his reserve of humor, he rebuffed her.

"You are admirable. I notice you dare lay a hand on me. I believe you would dare twist the robe of God, if you saw there what you wanted. And how much there is you want! To love, to worship and ennoble! And now you stand before a dying altar fire—I could really be eloquent over you—I could find the language of a poet. Here you watch this man in the test, and your hero-worship crumbles."

"I do not speak for him," she retorted steadily. "But the great thing beyond. I tell you, if I could take this anarchist's guilt on myself—if I could give myself—"

"For what?" he put in— "the usual sort of thing a woman sacrifices for—her love, or her sentiment for the mere thing, love—"

"No."

"What, then?"

"The brotherhood."

He laughed inconsequentially. "You tire me with repetitions. We've just tested the brotherhood. It at once created a panic. Now leave it."

"Tell me," she muttered, "why you took this boy —sheltered him—fed him, are patient with him? Ah, yes, I've seen a hunger in your face, seeking always in this man's home for something denied you! You've nothing—a beggar!"

"I am, first of all, a humorist," he retorted, "and lastly a humorist. Do not disturb yourself with seeking any significances in me. I take the most

obvious and reasonable things and hold them up to men's gaze; it makes one shout with laughter to watch them howl and run. Christ might have had a like diversion if He had not been such a serious person."

She was preparing to go, leaving him sleepily apathetic in the chair. She tried to summon her hate of him, but one can neither hate nor love a fat man who seems intent on regarding one with mere good humor.

CHAPTER XIII

THURSDAY evening Rand came alone to the house, John Bride, who had told him of his father's request—an invitation that had the peremptoriness of an order—being busied at his flats on some of his interminable small meddlings with his tenants' fortunes. The old Scot had touched Rand's arm as he told of it: "Lad, it did na' surprise me. I've watched the auld man since ye came; he drew himself further away, but he can not deceive me. It's the loosening of waters long held back—the father's crying out for ye behind his pride."

The son had met the news with silence unlike himself.

"Ye'll go?" Brother John continued; "ye'll go and ye'll be civil for the common humanity o' it—apart from its policy, and I do not say ye are above that. Ye'r the sole heir of Rand's. Ye'll go, man?"

"To eat with him, drink with him—perhaps more—listen to him. I am equal to it, John Bride."

"This is no the speerit for it, Herford. It was not so the prodigal came."

"Did you think me one?"

The old man sighed; his had been a thankless employ for a thankless guest the week since Rand

came to him. "Ye both need kindlier way," he murmured, "two stubborn pieces—hard coin to lie o' the same pocket. Ah, well—let be! I'll meet ye there. There'll be Hayes and his woman, and the professor and his handsome wife, and auld John—the old ghost house will have seen no such dinner party in sixteen years. Eh?—just to open it to the sun would be a human service."

From this Rand had come alone to his father's house, entering, not as he had done, by the side way past Ennisley's apartments, but up the broad walk of old cracked tiles to the front. Bullock opened the door and, without greeting, the son passed in. He paused on the noiseless rugs and looked back at the aged servant closing the door, his bald head grotesque under the flicker of the high bluish lights shed from the crystal pendants in the chandelier. The son remembered this—Bullock's head like a blue beetle shining in the ironic shadows of the hall —so he had seen it twenty-five years ago.

The old man ambled back to his wonted quarters, under the turn of the rear stairs. Rand went to the library; he stood looking quietly at the rear alcove. In the heavy and austere draping of the entrance some one moved. The light was dim, but he saw now a form drawing about itself the hem of the portière and glancing beyond to the ancient begilded pier glass that ran from floor to ceiling between the shuttered windows. Louise moved softly, she bent, holding the fabric about her

shoulders, her hips, smoothing it, looking back at the dim reflection, a single glint of light on her face, her hand to her hair—this was the picture he saw. She drew her shoulders back, she breathed deep—she imagined herself quite alone, and she lived the brief moment. It was a trick she had done many times when time hung in the silent house—to come here to the great rooms, tomb-like—to draw about her the heavy weave and stand watching herself. She imagined herself the mistress here; she had an orientalized love of draperies, the feel of rich stuffs, perfumes suggesting passions dead, hidden in other years. She pictured herself thus standing rapt, attentive, commanding in some theatric crisis of the world, or an immolation exquisite in its pure offering of self to some call of the soul, the pathos that you can not quite call out to the imagination.

This was a secret giving to her secret self; she wondered at it at times; it seemed an atavistic prompting from some line of queens, this spell to which she gave herself in the rich man's house; she, the essentially modern, agnostic, tolerant, resolute, steadfast day by day in her meager life—a Jew girl, pale, with thick coarse hair, a grave face and eyes with their fixing blue. It was only here in Rand's house, silent, alone, she lent herself to this. She stood in this dream, believing herself a Boadicea, a Joan, the Roman matron offering her jewels. . . . She would, indeed, have been a mother, to send a man-child to the world, grasping

power, dominating his time, compelling pause. And with all this inner woman splendor she was merely Miss Hergov, a secretary-stenographer in a rich man's house, subdued, contained, faithful.

And now, past her apparition in the glass, she saw Rand. Instantly she turned, still in the drapery; but he had come nearer, and she stood, transfixed in her pose, when he spoke.

"I told you once," he said gravely, "to wear always a flower in your hair. Here—this." He had held out a sprig of young lilac which he had plucked, coming from the gate. "This—" he went on—"it will complete the picture—it will satisfy even me, and that, I assure you, is much." And with his serious gesture he held it to her. She let the curtains fall slowly, her fingers closed on the green, rough-broken stem. She was too surprised for words; too studied with her attempt to hate. From the shadows of the house he was always coming silently on one or the other of them to burst their bubbles. He stepped away to his first position, looking back, not at her, but at the picture in the mirror which had that inexplicable charm of a presentment, the mystery of verisimilitude which one would rather see than the life it counterfeits—there is, in fact, in a mirror, always the occult.

Then he spoke again, gravely, musically. You would have supposed him a master staging an episode; an artist setting his model. "Don't speak—go on with your dream, the lilac in your hair, the

drapery about you. You are beyond yourself—a little drab of duty—don't speak—the thing is admirable—complete. It satisfies even me."

Then he had gone, leaving her dumfounded, alone in the half-lights. And after a moment when she stole swiftly to the hall, he had disappeared. She went back mute, feeling of the lilac stem.

Rand had gone to the upper hall; he paused once, listening, the silence intolerable. He met old Bullock toiling heavily up the rear stairs.

"I forgot to say, sir," he began, "that dinner is to be served at half-past seven. Mr. Hayes could not come sooner, and Judge Rand is lying down."

There was an hour to wait. The son nodded. When the man had gone, he frowned against the accusing walls. He would not endure this. He went to the rear and down a corridor to a zinc-covered door beaten full of nails, close-fitting, padlocked. He opened this with his key, stepped down, and was in a narrow cross corridor on whose mattinged floor the dust lay thick with a stirred trail down its middle to the end of the wing. He went on and at a closed door, knocked, rattled it until the dynamiter came, Karasac, thin-faced, rat-eyed, suspicious, savage, refusing to speak, holding his broken arm in its dirty clothes, merely watching the other, his dim soul groping, too, at the enigma.

At half-past seven Stephen Rand met his guests in the drawing-room, with its gilt oval mirrors, its

shuttered windows in whose laces hung the smell of disuse, its stiff furniture of horsehair and oak, the pitiableness of fashion gone. The wife of Byron Hayes, the superintendent of his South mills, greeted him with the sympathetic effusion, the adulatory smirk which the dependent rich give to the over-rich and great. She had the sort of middle-class over-dressing, the conforming type of matron you will see about the best hotels and in Pullman sections, the smug assumption of caste in the American woman which the rub of the democracy of business has kept from her complementing man. Hayes, the self-made, was more true. Corbett Ennisley was there, quiet, paler than usual, greeting the judge with some constraint. And John Bride, in a quaintly long coat and bulging shirt bosom, his face red, rich as a beet salad, with his dry quip about the weather and his dig at the billiards—this was the group gathered in more or less pretense of urbanity for this momentous night—the return of the prodigal. They had a trying period of waiting, the pointless, uncertain talk of the expectant and unsecure. The justice glanced again at his watch.

"Your wife, Doctor," he said to Corbett, "is not here. . . . And my son—" he stopped, his clean-cut lips closing—it was like the fellow at the crisis of his life to make them wait, to draw their nerves to intolerable tension.

"The mon put off early," John Bride said. "Stephen, he must be here."

"I've not seen him." The judge beckoned Bullock.

"He is here," the man answered, "I left him in the hall above an hour ago, sir."

"Well—well—" the judge was testy—it was not a good omen. "We shall go on without him. He can find his place in his own way—he'd always do that at the best. Come, my friends—Mrs. Ennisley—here?"

Demetra joined them without, the justice bowing in his austere courtesy. Corbett's mother was with the wife, greatly frightened, wondering if her lace neck-piece was up or down, her claw of a hand going to it ever.

So they got seated at last in that inconsequential and silly ferment of the guest ill at ease; Mrs. Hayes at the justice's right, the others along with no order, John Bride's bloom of a face peering up from the end among the tarnished candlesticks, like a monkey behind bars. Corbett had his mother by his side, and his wife was across with Mr. Hayes. Demetra studied his face. It seemed older within the week. She wondered if, too, the nights had lined her own.

John Bride brought in some clatter with the soup—his tenants and Tubby's toothache—looking roguishly across at the country woman and her awe. He drew her out with this. She forgot the judge's mask-like face at the end of the table, the pompous bulk of Mrs. Hayes, the stealthy serving-man and the close room—all this fearsomeness beyond her

Iowa conceptions. The rest listened to old John's jokes and the old woman's wide-eyed if furtive little cackles—they were ill-placed, waiting . . . the justice's face one you would not look at long.

"La' sakes," answered the country woman to John's quip, "you must like young ones, advertisin' for poor folks that has 'em to fill your flats. It's rill queer—like my Corbetty and his young ones workin' in them mills down South."

Brother John tried to cover with his snigger. The mention of the mills was as a dagger thrust up from the board before each guest.

"Ah, woman—I get my toll of them. They do an old heart good, comin' down the stairs wi' their clatter. Some folk complain o' the noise, but it does me good. It's a cheerfu' human sound in the morning, and grand to think of o' nights—my property shelterin' the bairns."

"And you never had none?" she returned. "You never married, Mr. Bride?"

The old Scot laughed; he looked about and at his cousin—perhaps they knew something that forty years had hidden. But the judge put in, gravely: "Madam, he had a wife and child in one—it was the railroad he put out through the Northwest in pioneer days, and nursed and dandled until it could walk alone. There's towns full of folk out through the Dakotas that would never have been if John had preferred a snug bed to storm and work and building. There were branches where we faltered, but

John went ahead, pleading for the country, proclaiming what it should come to. He's been husband and father to more cities than there are fingers on my hands . . . and little they know or care."

John laughed; the old woman getting back from her confusion at being addressed so long and boldly by the great man, so simply, too, and humanly. To hear him praise another man suddenly enlarged you.

"I've heard tell," she began, finding a pride in her courage to talk. "We was West afore that. My boys' pa and me come from Pennsylvania afore the war—months and months, when they wan't no road beyond the Missouri. The prairie schooners wormin' on and on, the critters droppin' in the heat and dust and the men folks fightin' the Indians off ahead, and the wimmen and children livin' on cornbread and buffalo juice, the critters was that thin. And my Jared led that train and when he come on trappers and traders on the Platte he'd say: 'Which road, neighbor—which way?' And they p'inted on, and so we come to the Black Hills country, the critters droppin' in their yokes with heat and hunger and the arrows in 'em. And we stayed year in and out till the grasshoppers took the corn and the Indians the stock, and we was drove back across the river to Ioway. But I remember the wimmen and children huddled under the canvas tops while the men parleyed ahead, findin' the road for 'em through the short grass country—allus it was that—'Which road, neighbor?' "

They looked upon her curiously, the judge, the son, the foreign wife; her scrawny neck and year-worn face—the dowdy little mid-West woman, who followed the fighting men and gave her sons to its newer battles for the last of the races pressing on the long trail to the sunset. The wife regarded her and the old shy eyes came back to this astonishing, full-lifed creature—her son's wife in her black, low-cut gown of filmy stuff accenting her sensuous charm.

"That was the land we came to," said the judge, "we old ones. There's different breed now, madam —more evil questions."

"Man, it's grand still," John Bride retorted. "Ye must look larger, that's all. There's the same roarin' and pourin' in and buildin' and hammerin' wi' all the foreign folk. Ye can see, Mrs. Ennisley, can't ye—we were the first rough workers—only that."

"That's what my Corbetty says. He never gives up standing for these foreign folks—these strikes and fights and all. 'Pears like a body can't pick up a paper nowadays without somebody gittin' blowed up."

They were stilled again. The judge looked grimly down the board at his men guests; they had no re-assurance. Hayes made an impatient gesture. And then his wife, who had found herself overborne, said, with an air of putting a snaffle on the question: "There's more in the papers to-night." She looked about triumphantly at Stephen Rand and at Corbett Ennisley. "Another one is dying!"

"Dying?" Corbett muttered, despite himself.

"Another policeman. And the papers said they were tracing the anarchists back to Chicago—that most likely they were hid here."

"Yes?" The wife sat forward; she glanced at Corbett's profile turned up the table to the judge's composed face. The old mother fidgeted with the intuition which told her that her beloved was in question.

The mill superintendent thought it was his turn; the subject had been introduced, and it was one thing on which he could talk victoriously, undefeatably. He went on in the pause:

"But the thing's over, Judge. Fourteen arrests made at the college settlement—only one of the dynamiters got away—a fellow named Karaski, or something like that—a Pole—a mill-boy."

The judge grunted. Hayes took it for assent and went on: "Karaski—did you know any hand of that name at your meetings, Professor?"

Corbett's eyes went slowly from Hayes to his wife. He saw her eyelids flitting, low.

"No," he answered quietly, "I never heard of him."

"Well, they'll get him." Hayes' voice had the snap of the hungry hound long deferred. "The police are wild—five killed." He chuffed away at his salad. "They'll catch the beast and hang him—yes, it's a wild beast hunt, that's what it is."

The judge's eyes wandered to the somber door

and to the unturned plate at Brother John's side. Hayes took his reverie for patience; he continued:

"How long would it be, sir, before the assassins are at our throats if this teaching is continued—the magazines and the colleges and some of the churches? How long, sir, with this socialistic pap preached and listened to, unrebuked, unpunished?"

The socialist across from him stirred, his eyes shone; he would have spoken, but the judge's patient voice came in: "The laws will uphold, my friend—will punish and protect—"

The wife had started, turned, her white hand uplifted. "Listen!"

And they paused, they knew not why. She was looking at the butler by the door.

"A sound—" they heard her whisper, as if to herself.

The servant inclined his head as if she had questioned him: "A sound," he said. "Madam is right."

And on the instant old Bullock put a startled face in their line of vision of the hall: "A noise?" they heard him mutter. "Footsteps in the wing, and something like a body falling!"

They were stilled; the butler cleared his throat apologetically; he appeared to be thrusting the old door man to one side.

"I did not hear," the father put in to the silence. "A fall?" And then he quavered, an old man perturbed, haunted: "My dear—a fall!" "Listen!" the wife retorted, and each who saw her

start—the dread upon her. And then they heard again old Bullock's exclamation, the butler moved with a mutter—and Rand was in the way. They stared at him; he was in evening clothes much too small, tight across his heavy shoulders, the white linen and the tie bringing out the year-hardened bronze of his full neck and broad face—tall, grave, with his Indian stealth he had come. He fixed the dim room, the group with a look, and then came with his astonishing agility to the empty chair between John Bride and Demetra and dropped easily into it. He looked about with his imperturbable eyes, his half-leer, half-smile of humor.

They stared at him; they awaited his word, the father the dumbest of them all. Then John Bride rose with a hand out to him in an honest joy.

"Rand, lad, I say ye—welcome! There's four times welcome here!"

"You well may, John Bride," the new guest retorted, "it's been overlong."

"You're late," the father said, his heavy eyes upon him. "Bronson, take the plates—and serve him as he wishes."

But if the devil had stepped among them they could not be more obsessed. The superintendent and his wife stilled, Corbett staring, and his wife, her eyes bloodshot, unable to leave his face. And to her he now grimaced with his old barbaric trick, baring his teeth like a gargoyle, bald, acrid, silent. The country mother clucked in her throat; John

Bride sighed. His presence smote them—it drove out what of common ease the hour had found.

"Your Honor," he began, "let us forego the soup. Bring meat and bread—the elemental things. There's too much made of this eating. There's neither poetry nor taste in it. A man should eat alone and be done with it. . . . And there's nothing pretty in watching a woman tear flesh with her teeth."

"Man," old John chuckled, "ye'r bauld out wi' it!"

The son was unmoved—if he played with them, they could not guess. On Hayes and his wife his glance went with ironic indifference—the wife felt the sting of the ignoring. She must assert herself: "Now, I think nothing's finer than a dinner party. It brings people together and makes 'em sociable. Society depends a great deal on 'em—dinners."

"So it does on the police."

"The police?" The little Iowa woman was uncomprehending: "More killed?"

"We were speaking of the riots, sir," Hayes got back his managerial manner. "Five dead from the bomb now."

"Most of the devices to get people out of the world are indecent." He singled the manager's wife with his unlit eye. "And death settles nothing. It's like a fool who interrupts a reasonable discussion by beating a drum."

The one-time dressmaker's assistant mumbled the

ineffectual dissent of the inept of mind; for twelve years she had had a curiosity about the son of Rand's house—she had promised herself this week that he should not badger her as was said to be his way with his father's associates.

They little relished him; this was plain. Hayes went on with the injured ponderosity of the righteous and the bewildered: "The police, sir, were defending your property."

"Exactly. For my profit. We're lucky—we rich."

The judge's face hardened. "My son, have you come back to this? still the mocker of all good—the very hands that would protect you?"

"I have little love for that which I buy—and one can buy duty, the cheapest bargain in the world."

The old man sat wearied; his dream, it seemed, faded. "We need not discuss the mills now, at this table."

"Eh? Why not? Let us see clearly—a policeman dynamited—a mill-boy hanged? What does it come to? Merely that we preserve our profit."

They stirred. He saw the wife's face steel itself against his look. The superintendent's woman took up the matter with a voice that trembled: "You're unhuman—impossible. The mills—"

"The mills?" he retorted. "Great God—the mills, whirring—whirring, always, day and night! The wheels go round, the smoke drifts off, and the traders haggle and lie—for what? Merely our divi-

dends? Why quarrel about a policeman more or less blown up, deleted? We can buy others in their places—what of it, then?"

The old judge, it appeared, was trying to rise, feebly. "Unchanged—unregenerate," he muttered. "I'd hoped you'd come back a man."

"I am more—a prophet."

They had no answer for a time, and then John Bride brought his: "I think you are fair cracked, Herford. Stephen's mills—the property—they need a strong hand now. There have come evil times."

The superintendent spoke: "The mills, Rand, have not paid a dividend this season, what with the mollycoddling interference of some we know."

"That is, indeed, a crime." His grave voice lifted in solicitude. "The little beasts that work for us—haven't they enough to eat? Wear? Brains to reason with? It is a beautiful world to live in—see—dream of—and they live but once. God help me, but give the little animals what they wish and be done with it!"

"They said," muttered the manager's wife, "that you were mad—"

"I never could live within smell of my tribe—that's true."

"And you come to us preaching of morality," she went on, despite Hayes' frown: "*You*—to tell us truth!"

"I could instruct the wisest of you. I could preach endlessly to you. I do, indeed, lie awake

nights to coin phrases to heap on you. Let us, then, discuss the matter. In your gardens you breed the pure soul of a flower; in your stables the strength of fine horses; in your preserves the beauty of the deer—all for your pleasure, your profit. And in the mills, eh?—what? The beast—also for your profit."

"You are beyond reason or common sense," she snapped against the judge's gesture for her silence. "This is all your vanity!"

"Doubtless. For that I would build much. When this place is mine I'll have no money-getters at its table. All the tongue-tied poets, the old men and the cripples, the blind, the failures and the children —all those who knew not how to work their brothers for a profit. To lie on the grass and look up at the sky—to drip their fingers in cool water in the fountains."

"One day—and the next, may I ask?" Hayes grinned at him.

"The next—to the devil with them, I suppose? Man, I can't lift the world!"

The doctor muttered; he had had no word in this. His hand was on his mother's knee, her hand within his fingers. When his eyes found his wife she did not look again at him. The old justice shifted in his seat.

"Enough of this. It was like you to start a fool's talk on the instant you came back. You will remember that there are women present."

"Women? Let them listen to me. They are the Sybarites of the age—the autocrats. All the cruelties are upheld by their cat's love of a warm bed, their truckling to authority."

The manager's wife quivered, jelly-like—she half rose: "I suppose you've never found one great enough for your vanity!"

"Once I thought I had—a beautiful harp, and she thrilled at my touch. Soul—a nobleness you can not imagine—seemed in her. Eh, well—in the end she was only a woman—bought with a ring and some stuff or other. They gave her a house fat and rich, smelling of servants, and they told her the lies they tell—to be content and please them. Yes, they put the soul of my woman there—she became common enough."

The old mother, it appeared, had sobbed; she murmured: "Lord bless us! And him a minister of God!"

Her daughter-in-law had not stirred from her composure. At times she looked at Rand and at times away—at times she met his easy glance—at times she did not dare.

"You—you dare speak of women!" Mrs. Hayes cried out. *"You!"*

"There you go, barking at me again," he answered gravely. "Women—I seem to earn their hate."

"You're strange," the old man whispered, "the actor, the *poseur*—always."

"That, Your Honor, is why I am listened to. It is a fine trick. I think, indeed, that I have done excellently to-night—I have had the tongue of a poet in me, the audacity of a god."

They stirred impotently; they fretted for words that he could not turn bitter on their lips. Their silence seemed to annoy him presently, for from one to another his gray eye sought and studied and came back again to each in turn. The father broke the constraint after a time, raising his weary hand.

"Let us be still of this," he said, "let us suffer him and go our ways."

Rand sat before them in the yellow table light, sunken in his chair, eating little. Corbett's wife did not look at him; her body shrank to the table, leaning on it, her eyes across the board at her husband, or intent on John Bride at the end, or shifting calmly to the host beyond the others. So moveless had she been, one would have thought she was a child drinking the words of some tale of wonders.

But now, in the pause, they heard a voice without the room, a maid's excitement, and then old Bullock's querulousness. The butler, too, was there, exclaiming, warning in reproof. But the girl's shrill fright rose; she stared within the dining-room.

"A man—they caught him sneaking down the laundry steps. He had a knife—he's bloody, and Terance grabbed him."

Her cackle came too loud to disregard. The but-

ler made a motion to keep her back, to check her, but again she cried: "A man—Terance has him—he's bringing him!"

Within the room Hayes lifted back his chair: "What's this?" he said—"in the house—a man?"

He went out. With a sound of some alarm his wife followed. The justice looked up perturbed, questioningly. The butler went out fidgeting again. And the others had no speech. Corbett's eyes were staring at the table all disarrayed; they lifted presently, slowly across, rising to meet his wife's; and steadily they looked at each other, so still, so moveless, that it was as if a finger pointed at them, jeering.

And while they stared at each other the old woman's dry throat clucked: "This house—it's possessed—seems like. A burglar—what next?" Then, looking at Rand's son across the table, she cried perplexedly: "Lord bless us—there's blood on you—your sleeve!"

The wife whirled, glanced down. Beside her, by his chair, the stuff had dripped. It lay a glassy little pool upon the polished floor.

CHAPTER XIV

IN the hall without, the altercation of the discovery went on. Within, the eyes of Stephen Rand, of old John, of Corbett and his wife and mother were on the newer guest. He lifted his left arm a trace after the old woman's exclamation, to show a slight stain.

"Merely that I scratched myself," he said, "no matter." And, apart from the wife staring down past her skirts at the blood by his chair, they thought this all—they resumed their intent on the voices without. John Bride rose and went to peer curiously; and then at the heavy tone of the stableman, Terance, the host followed, coming to lean feebly on John's arm at the door and look out. "What's this? A man—in my house?"

"He said he was here to see a friend, sir—that's all he'd say."

"And hurt, too—a youngish fellow with a bad face, but I can not think a thief," said Terance.

Beyond they had him—a little fearful and disordered group of servants about a figure urged on by the stableman's hand on his wounded shoulder, twisting and halting and shuffling with the pain. They

stopped him before the superintendent and his wife and the two old men in the door, Terance still gripping his coat. Karasac faced them all, sullen, a brute trapped.

In the dining-room the wife leaned forward, her eyes on Corbett. It would seem that in her the press of sensation was dead—a woman of stone but with eyes that could flit, watch, fear, hate. By her Rand was sunk, his face complacent; you would have thought him a mathematician absorbed in an abstraction.

"Lord bless us," put in the old mother; "a burglar!"

Corbett rose and pushed out, as a man will crowd to see a killing, though it twists his brain with its horror: "Stay here, mother," he said, but she went after; she put her arm about him in the doorway, and they, with the others, watched the little drama beyond.

Hayes was saying: "A friend?—come to see a friend?"

"That's what he said, sir." The maid gasped and went on, gathering a pride in telling: "Alice saw him first trying to get to the door to the laundry. He must have come down the stairs from the wing."

"And he had a knife, sir, and when I called at him he ran, and when I reached him he whirled and struck. He hit the wood, sir, and it went that close to me! I knocked him down and he howled—then we saw he was hurt—his arm in splints, sir."

"I do believe wrapped in linen of this house," the maid put in. They stood in triumphant apprehension about him. Beside big Terance the prisoner was a weakling, disheveled, in a coat too large, his narrow shoulders drawn, his thin face a wedge thrust out, his rat eyes moving from one to the other, as an animal's awaiting the kill.

"A man caught here—wounded in my house?" the justice echoed. "A friend—to see a—*friend?* What's this?"

They heard the tinkle of falling silver; the swish of a skirt—Demetra had come out, leaving Rand now alone by his father's board in his apathy. The wife faced the group, the captured man, old Bullock, the wan light on his bald head, Terance with his gray side chops, the fluttered maids beyond. And above them, on the stairs, with a note-book in her hand, was Louise Hergov, who must have heard the gabble and the fighting somehow. She was still, watching, listening. From her vantage it must, indeed, have been a stage of players there below.

The justice turned to Mrs. Ennisley: "My dear, it must have been the noise you heard—the man getting in."

"There was no chance," said Terance. "No, he's been here long—that I'm sure of."

The wife tried to move against their questioning: "A noise?" she said faintly. "Yes—I—remember."

The captured man looked at her, a long disdain. She cleared the hair from her eyes to watch him,

his glance going now to Corbett, a stubborn question, a wonder—his hand moving troubledly in the grotesque pockets. Once he was about to speak, his lips baring, and then he relapsed to his sullen defense against them, the hostiles who would slay him on a word of the law.

"The police, sir?" said Bullock. "Sara tried to telephone at once and it wouldn't work. She's waiting to get central."

"Wait!" muttered the justice. "This—let us see."

The manager's wife had waddled near in an excess of curiosity: "Byron, he's like a mill-hand—his shirt, the kind the store sells them. He looks like one of those foreigners—such a dogged look—do you notice, Hayes?"

They stirred with an articulation or so, one could not have told from whom. The superintendent came nearer. "By George," he said. "He has! And his face—they get that way, raised in the mills—a sort of hound type—look at him!"

"Does he speak English?" put in his wife. "What? A little—broken you say, Terance? Byron, he's a Polack—a mill-man. God help us—here? For what?" She half shrieked—"To assassinate you —the judge—to blow us up!"

"Preposterous!" the justice answered. "He's a mere boy—hurt—probably escaping from the police."

Hayes seized the heavy and ungainly coat, drew it aside: "He's wearing one of the shirts we sell the

hands—and his shoes—company store shoes! And he's a Polack. Here—speak!" he growled.

The other said nothing; they shook him again—he muttered in pain and glared—nothing more. "I tell you," went on the mill manager, "here in Chicago is a fugitive from Randsville—Good God! I see! The anarchist who escaped!"

His wife's voice came shrilly: "The papers said one was headed North—Karaski—something like that!" She bawled her genius of intuition. They crowded nearer—except the doctor and his wife and mother; and beyond, in the other room, Rand the impassive, sunk huge, gross, in his chair.

"Eh?—man?" John Bride muttered. "Can it be?"

"Byron," cackled the manager's wife, "the police! An anarchist—"

"Be still," the judge said gravely. "Let's see to this. You've come here, man—for what? To see a friend, you said. Why, that can't be!"

"Look at his hands!" Hayes tore one from its concealment. "A mill-man's hands—they get *that* way before they're fourteen. And who'd he come to see? Look here—his shirt—it's blackened by powder—torn and bloody. That's what the papers said—the dynamiter was wounded!"

"But here—" the judge put in; he turned, he swept the circle of faces; he looked aloft at Louise Hergov on the stairs. Then he made a gesture to the servants that they knew in the recluse: "You will go."

"But, sir," Terance blurted, "the police—"

"Not a word yet. We shall attend to this. Go, all of you."

They went with the slow feet of the dispersed and underling. The old man was tottering on as if to close the door behind them, when Demetra flashed ahead of him and did it, then turned facing them, but with no word. It seemed they all were struck dumb. Then Hayes whirled with the quickness of an inquisitor of the third degree: "Karaski—that's your name—and you're the dynamiter—By God, yes!"

The prisoner merely sneered. His eyes wandered over them, the pallor of the judge, the old woman with her arm about her son, the wife silhouetted against the door to the servants' passage, John Bride with his red face.

"I tell you, it's plain," Hayes said. "The bomb-thrower fled here seeking help—a friend. In your house, Judge Rand—a justice of the supreme court!"

"Concealed here," whipped in his wife— "the house linen on his wounds. There's that great barn of a wing unused—never visited." She turned to Corbett Ennisley: "Professor, you know all that scum that used to gather at your college settlement —the foreigners, children and men. Was this man one of them?"

The professor, his hands folded, stood by the door. Before he could speak, Hayes added: "Yes —do you know him?"

Corbett looked from him to the prisoner, their eyes met full, steadily. Rand had come with his curious stealth, was peering past John's head to the center of the group. The prisoner's gaze wandered stupidly from one to another.

"No," retorted the doctor, "I do not know the man."

"I think," Hayes snarled, "he knows you. His eyes—watching all the time."

"Corbetty," quavered the old mother, clinging to him, "whatever is the matter?"

He seemed to feel they knew he lied: He went before the prisoner: "I never saw the man," he repeated. He saw his wife's eyes glitter as he turned aside. Louise, on the staircase, stirred. Over John Bride's shoulder Rand's full face had a smile.

John came forward, touched the captured man's sleeve; he was, in fact, to all of them, a sort of new and hunted animal. "This coat," John said— "it's a bit odd—I've seen it somewhere—a big man's friendly coat for sic a shrunk boy's body."

"Yes," the manager's wife put in, "a hunting coat. I've seen it too—and where? Mr. Rand, you had one like it."

"Eh—Lord!" John said. "I think so!"

"My son," the justice turned— "your coat—has it been stolen?" He started at the other's face: "Is this it?"

"Honored Judge—" the man bowed gravely— you would have said he had rehearsed the part, that

he had found by study the sonorous music of his voice for this climacteric— "it is." He raised his right hand open to the captured man— "A gift, merely."

"You gave it to him?" Hayes laughed. "A mill-boy—bomb-thrower flying for his life—coming here —*hidden*—by a friend. Who else, besides myself and Doctor Ennisley, has been at the mills—who'd be his friend?"

The stranger's eyes went always with their shift to Corbett, to Demetra, and back at his captors. He had become bewildered; he watched Rand fascinated; once he muttered, cursed, shook his head.

"Your coat, my son?" the judge went on—then sharply—"Man, you're bleeding—there, and on the floor! What's this?"

Their eyes were all on him. He heard the wife behind him at the door, whisper, sob. They were too intent on him to notice. He raised his hand with some airy assurance as an orator who had at last got the attention of each auditor.

"We fought," he went on gravely. "He would leave the house and I tried to stop him. Eh—this?—a scratch, merely."

"You knew he was here? Concealed him?" Hayes' voice was incredulous. "Look here—he's a mill-hand—he knows the doctor, too!"

His jerky questions faltered before Rand's gray eye, the lift of his amused lip, his bald indifference: "I can not answer for that."

"Rand," the father muttered, staring, "you can not mean he came here to see you—his friend?"

"You are a wise, an upright judge. The very same."

They fell back from him. Hayes laughed briefly, unbelievingly. "You fool," he said,—"to play at this!" He turned to Karasac, seizing roughly his coat, giving it a jerk that made the mill-boy twinge with agony. "Here—the truth—you can tell it—you!"

The prisoner's restless eye had not left Rand; he stepped before them, looking now at Corbett, then at Demetra. He seemed to find some course through the mystery; his eyes beckoned her: *"Brot!"* he began, and half-pointed—*"Brot!"*

Her cry stopped him—a single word in Polish, like his own. They started. "My dear?" the old judge muttered.

"To see me," Rand broke in, and smiled: "Merely that."

"I don't believe you," Hayes retorted. "Explain it, then!"

"Go to my rooms. A man has slept there four nights. You will find there food—I brought it from John Bride's. . . . The old man will tell you."

"God help him—yes!" the Scotchman answered. "For a dog, he said."

"Go on," the father said patiently. "Where did you meet him, then?"

"The road. I was with him once—in New Or-

leans. He can tell you—on the levees there—he was a common tramp—and I?—well—that is my affair."

"But this—an anarchist?—the mills?"

"Yes—how came he to find you out the other night?"

"A comradeship. I have belonged to the circle. He will tell you he was sent. Engle, the New York comrade—Breitmann—I know them well enough. You know we have an organization."

Hayes started from him: "Good God! You ask us to believe you?"

"A member of an anarchistic circle?" The father was steel in spring. "Go on!"

"Eh—on? There is no more. The boy came here. The comrades South have kept in touch with me. When they had put through the thing they hurried the tool off—he was directed here. I had told them I should be here. It is program, merely."

They stood back, stupefied.

"You ask us to believe?" Hayes muttered. "Here—you!" He turned on the mill-hand. But Rand was before him, taking Karasac's arm gently, raising it as he spoke: "Speak, then. Quit playing the fool, or you'll swing. Speak—Rand—Rand—friend—brother!"

The youth looked about, seeking other eyes; he met stony faces, alien, hostile. He nodded, he grinned in a sickly assent: "Yass—Meest Rand—he know!"

Hayes swung on him: "You lie!"

Karasac smiled his cunning, his eye lit on the sister—clothed, rich, beautiful—all that the great world held of life was about her, it seemed; his dulled face lit again with cunning: "Yass—Rand—brother—comrade. I come—se-eck heem." Then he extended his hand in a vain enjoyment. "Yass, Karasac, ze anarchist—hang me! *Karasac*—hang me!"

They looked at his blatant howling; then at Rand in his smiling. "Is that enough?" he went on easily. "It is a long story. I have been with them—yes. One of the San Francisco group. And this boy, here—a hunted beast coming to me—it is my affair—a comrade—a brother-beast, here in this house."

He overbore them, seeming to find a surpassing pleasure in the situation. The justice did not stir for a time; then his voice came, a mutter, an attempt to give it its old coldness and control. "Well, the thing is like you. I can not tell what truth is in you, but your life—out of the darkness you've come from—the thing is not beyond you."

The old man was groping to a chair, he sat down weakly. "Out of the dark you came to me," he whispered, "the dark—"

The manager's wife came nearer. "Judge Rand, the police—"

The father mumbled: they could not hear; they clung one to the other, dulled, confused. Byron Hayes said: "Yes, man—the law—"

Rand's grimace stopped him. "Eh?—the law—

kill the beast—strangle him. The law—what did it ever do for him—a boy of the mills, a rat night long in the spool rooms? Who made him, then? The law? The schools and doctrines? You?—I? We took our profit, as the law directed—from him."

The manager's wife shifted. "You defend him—"

He went to her with the serious, high pose of a preacher; he reached to touch a necklace that she wore. "In the mills they made him for you, madam. Eh?—on your breast you wear a stone—who won its light for you? Its gleam? A little profit wrung from a child's soul—a dividend from his needs, his dreams, his hopes—to make what, eh? Your necklace, madam."

She would not listen to his voice filling the room with its music, his actor's ease, his smile a pity on them you would not forget.

The father muttered brokenly: "My son, will you be still?"

"You fool," sneered the manager, "Judge Rand, the police—"

Demetra had come nearer: "No—no—" she said as if her soul was on the rack.

Hayes moved to the door. "Judge Rand, we'd best take no chances. We'd best telephone—"

The justice rose. "Yes, the law must take its course."

But the son proposed, with the inconsequentiality of a parlor conundrum, another course.

"Come now, let us be reasonable. Here are we all. Here is this man by whom our fortunes, reputations, peace of mind are endangered. He has broken our laws, he has outraged us—he admits it. Well, then, why the police, and a trial with all its clamor and sensation merely to kill the fellow? Here we are gathered, the law, society, commerce, the schools, all our respectablenesses, and worthinesses represented; and here's the beast who defies us, weak, ignorant, alone, shut in by the walls of this house. He can't resist us—let us then try him, and condemn him, strangle him where he stands."

They were speechless. He went on with serious good nature. "What more reasonable, safe, cheaply done? Why we are saved—all of us, not a smirch on our damned good names—eh? The justice shall condemn, Hayes and the doctor shall hold him, the women look on and approve and I—I'll cut his throat."

The women raised a cry, shuddering. The men turned heavy faces to him.

"You fool," the mill manager said, "be still. Judge, we'll turn him over to the law."

But again the son intercepted. "I think not. I've made you a proposal, reasonable, secret, appealing to any one of taste, rather than all the publicity that will otherwise follow. But you won't: then let me say, call the police, and I'll pollute your name to Heaven! You, Stephen Rand, justice of the su-

preme court, whose son is Rand, the anarchist—the red brother!"

Rand paused. He looked at the silent father. The bigness of the thing was on them. Half concealed by the shadows of the staircase Corbett had sunk to a seat. His mother's arm was about his neck; her bewildered comforting in his ear, at what, for what, she did not know. Only this—her boy was sunk, dumb, stricken, a little apart from this talking —her boy in his proud manhood.

"My name!" the father answered. "What is it? My wasted life!" He turned aside; he muttered: "Ah, well—give me a moment!" And then he turned again to them: "My friends, will you go? I wish to be alone to think of this."

Suddenly past them the wife flashed, passing the preacher, to come kneeling by the old man's chair, to touch his hand: "You'll not believe him—no! you'll not believe him."

"What else? My son, is not this true?"

"It's true."

Hayes came again to Karasac and caught his coat with a jerk that made the wounded man reel and scream his agony. "Speak—is this true?"

The mill-hand recovered, sobbing, biting back his pain. "Yass—brother!"

The old man rose, tottered to the door and pointed. "Go," he said—"my friends—all. And you'll not speak of this. I'd be alone."

They moved to go, but the manager pointed to

the prisoner: "Judge Rand—this man—a crazed criminal—"

The justice had a touch of his old courtly bearing, his frail dignity: "Go—all. I am answerable."

"If he escapes. There's the interests of society—the law—property!"

The old judge straightened; he was again, indeed, the judge. "My countrymen have entrusted these to me, have they not, for thirty years?"

They felt the rebuke. With a gesture Hayes left him, his wife following; brother John hesitating with a coo, and then, at Stephen's look, departing. The wife had not stirred; Corbett was sunk, his hands in his hair, his mother's arm about him.

"Doctor," the justice gravely said, "you heard me, did you not?"

The doctor rose; they heard his mighty sigh, explosive, as if some inordinate issue in him had flamed to vapor and must be exhaled. He looked at the wife, not at the son, nor at the mill-hand.

"Demetra!" he cried, and held his hand to her, moving away, the mother still clinging to him.

The wife, it seemed, was stupefied. She stood and heard him go, the old woman clinging, her quavering words at his ear. Their footsteps went on, dragging, weary, old, and she did not move. The judge's courtly gesture came to her again; his bow, stately for so frail and aged a man.

"My dear," he gently said, "go, leave us."

And then she went hurriedly after; in the door-

way, her hand to her mouth, as if setting her teeth in it, she blurted: "He would not speak—not speak!"

In the rear hall she came on them, and if one could shriek below the breath, she did it as she took her husband's arm: "Not speak—not speak!"

"Did you?" he whispered, as the mother stupidly gazed at them. And he went on with his women hanging to him, his face pale, but hardening, a mighty strength rising in him from some vision stretching from these walls to all the land, its hugeness, its mystery, its purpose; from all the world of underrunning life, struggling, beaten, failed, to which he could bring a man's gift of hand and brain and heart—from all this came faith and a fighting ardor. There was no sacrifice for it too great—he belonged to them, the coming ages—that was his work, his life. He said to her, steadily:

"I did not speak. There's a greater thing . . . let him accept—I accept."

The wife followed him with her inarticulate mutter.

Back in the front hall the others had not moved. Louise Hergov on the turn of the stairs, silent, unseen in the shadows, looked down on them still, the father, the son—and in the middle of the space under the light—the beast watching them.

CHAPTER XV

THEY stood within the lighted hall, the father and son, and a little way from them the mill-hand in the blood and stink of his unwashed clothes. When he moved, surprised that his guards had left him, the son, with an upraised hand, commanded his silence. He muttered sullenly, but obeyed.

The justice faced them slowly, dumb, it seemed that the ironic hand of coincidence had at this hour, this place, thrust itself upon his forgiveness; that behind a man's fairest endeavor lurks for ever chance, the blind devil whose grimace none may exorcise. But he came from this to his simple dignity; he said calmly: "My son, what is there to say?"

"We've never been given to much speech," answered the other.

"True—true. There is little need." The father's step seemed uncertain, his hand shaken, belying his hard face. "To-night I summoned you. It cost me much to do that—a human feeling that perhaps is weakness. You have told me this strange story, but I can not be surprised, knowing what your life has

been—your words, your philosophy—your truth, you say."

"Simple enough. Submission is the arch sin of the world—I've submitted to nothing. I regard you and your law-mongering and profit-taking as rather infamous, but let that be—we can go our ways."

The father made a pathetic gesture, and went on in his worn, even voice: "It's curious that we've come to this—the last of my line dying out in you—an unbelievable figure." He looked with some fascination at the son, his graven face attentive. "Well, go. No law can punish you as you have me. I think I can stop the mouths of my friends. Let the thing be buried—take this boy and go."

With that he turned his back and was going slowly out when Rand's voice came.

"A moment?" He touched the old man's arm lightly. "I'll go, but there's a fancy of mine I might explain. The mills—what will you do with them?"

The justice did not answer. "See here," Rand went on, "I've given up much, and it's a rough road I'll travel. I'm not made for your harness, but here's the mills—and our little beast-brother, eh? Look at him—he's not pretty. Well, if this fellow Ennisley knows how to breed a better look in the beast's face, in God's name, let him! If the little rats down there are hungry, feed them—what more simple and better for you to be about? But it's not a job for me—I'd not make a clerk or money-counter—I'd rather tramp first. But the mill rats—let

this professor hammer away at them—I'm damned if I care about the money. There's no man in all America can understand that, but damn me, if I want the money! I can't think of a thing it would buy for me."

The justice did not answer. Rand saw his white hair gleam under the light by the stairs. Then by his side he found the mill-boy, staring, brushing the matted hair from his eyes, in a frenzy to read the master's face. "You save me," he whispered, "and you lie—lie!"

The older man seemed to find a humor in this groping grotesque; his hand went to the other's shoulder—he went on with more gravity, after his instant study—"Boy, did you ever see the West?"

The other grunted, shaken in bewilderment.

"It's big. There's no mill smoke—a man can breathe." He paused, his great voice, low, intent: "Wait for me outside. I want a moment here alone."

The other followed his motion; he went to the door, looked back, his eyes glittering their suspicion, their hostile dread; then, a glance without, and he stepped to the balcony to the rainy night. Rand saw his white face leer once at the small side window, fitting the diamond pane for an instant, an evil picture that vanished.

The man within went to the library. He saw once in the reflecting panels his presentment, his evening clothes, his swarthy face above—he laughed with some complacence—then was stilled, for on

him and this human note there came the disdain of the house, its hate breathed to him. From here he saw across the hall the dining-room, its snowy cloth disordered above a flicker of candles, the chairs drawn back, the dark wainscoting, a jet of dulled metal here, there upon it—deserted, emptied, hollow. The room, its gasping lights, the great hall darkened to the turn of the stairs—somewhere on all this silence the faint closing of a door, as if from the house the last living had fled, as though from room to room a leper's touch had hunted them to the outside—that was all. He, alone, was here centered in the malign watching of the walls, the breathing of their hate to him.

He was before a picture indistinct above the glass-imprisoned books when Demetra came. He must have heard her skirts rustling, the quickness of her step down the front way flicking the stillness, but he had not turned when she stopped on the threshold. Once she tried to speak and failed and then again, nervously, an odd, brisk note.

"You—here?"

He checked her: "A moment. I wished to be alone. I was a boy here. That picture—" he indicated—"my mother—the fellow who painted it caught some fantastic trick that I seem to remember. There is a covert prophecy in the smile. I can not fathom it. It has for me the quality of the Mona Lisa—you may have seen it? This woman I can hardly remember has an odd interest to me.

Eh?—there are some queer corners in these cunning boxes of some sort of stuff we call brains."

She came nearer, disregarding his air of detached study and exploitation of the portrait: "Your father?" She breathed it low. "He sent you away?"

"Yes."

"Free?"

"Free."

She almost touched him wonderingly. "And my brother—free?"

"Free as air—if we manage to escape."

"You escape? *You?* You've done nothing in this! You mean you'll take him. Good God—you've saved him for what—where?"

He flicked his dead ash lightly. "To the road, I imagine. I've tramped it. There is a thing about it that is beyond you, but let me assure you I have fared worse than being a tramp. From the street, if one is a supreme egotist and has a sense of humor, the view is not so bad."

"Ah, you!" she cried, "to speak so now—in this situation!"

"What now? What situation?"

She was suffering; she turned; she whispered: "Going back, just when it seemed life offered—when there seemed light—a way for you—"

She could not speak further; he took it gravely up. "That is a concern. To give up Rand's place—his fortune and power—it did, indeed, exasperate me. But the chance was too great."

"Chance?" She answered blindly, at his meditation.

"It was complete, exquisite. They were all there—I should say, all America. Hayes, with his bourgeois importance of commerce, his wife with her pretense of caste and class and whatever else you women love to make of it when your husbands are not actually scratching the soil or on day-wages. Then, the doctor, with his underdog yelping, and the owl consequentiality of Stephen—the jurist of the Constitution, who, when he beats the puddle, all the other frogs shut up. Well, there they were, and if the devil had me I couldn't have resisted the opportunity. To walk before them all and say what none wants said—eh? Could I resist it—I, who am the greatest humorist of all this land between the seas? To make them crawl away, one after the other—it was an achievement, I assure you. It was round, complete. I feel now the jubilance of the artist who knows, and knows he knows."

"You—you—" she quivered—"At least I know you saved us." She slipped close to him, her voice beating out a passion she could not check—"Beneath it all, Herford," she whispered now, "we lied—we dared not speak—and you saved us!"

"Eh?—a pity! Lying is a dull device of fools. Mine, if you notice, was not a lie; it was a creation—distinctive, matchless. Look at it—hold it to the light—it will dazzle you."

She writhed, and presently she said: "If one but

knew—but knew!" and then she flashed about on him in a sort of crouch: "Herford, what did I ever mean to you? Tell me—I was a child then. Tell me —I will not mind!"

"I told you once. I thought I saw a marvel in you. I gave you all I could to bring it out. I am for ever pottering around with the souls of the ones who interest me, trying to see what stuff's in them. But yours—eh? It's common enough."

She drew in her shoulders, looked about as if in the shadows the beast lurked. "Ah, well, one's used to being lashed by you! But now you save me. Perhaps you cared—perhaps you dreamed—"

"Say it then," he grinned: "Might have loved you, eh? A memory? Look here. Did you actually suppose I'd give up my comfort here—this house, the mills, power—everything? Come now, did you imagine I'd throw it all up for a woman?"

She went to the table and sat as in a dream. Then she laughed strangely: "Go on—let me hear it all! I might have known—no, it wasn't for me! Ah, no—and I was fool enough to dream—"

He laughed. "We are back," he said, "where women bring all things. Love—its itch—its little round of hot lips, and hand claspings—its tears and smiles and home-comings, and hidden meanings and pretty ways—to remember one day with a flower, and another with a sweet. How marvelously easy to hold you subject lifelong—a word, a gesture—even a single look back at you as a man leaves the

house! It is indeed a marvel. I shall some day make a study of that, also."

She would not listen—it was as if she was beating her ears as she rose, throwing out her arms. And then she hurried back to him and poured to him her fierceness. "You come back—out of the dark—God knows from where—but you come back, thinking, hoping, for release. Yes, the adventure's about done—and you—I've seen a hunger in you—for a hand to be reached to you, for a heart to forgive—to love! And now—*now*—you go—you renounce this—you go back, you take this terror from me, on yourself. No, I'll not believe—I'll not! It was for me—to save me, Herford!" And her passion cried again: "To save me!"

He had for her the smile of a master tolerant of a pupil's lagging imagination: "At least do not be dull," he commented.

And while she watched, hardening herself against him, Louise Hergov came to the library. She was dressed for the street, her jacket closely buttoned, her short skirt showing the stout boots. She looked at them with a studied ignoring of what she must have heard.

"Where is he?" she asked at once.

"Waiting for me," Rand answered briefly. "Outside."

"He's not safe on the street. I have a plan for both of you for the present. If he's caught everything's undone. John Bride's is hardly the place for

him, but there are my rooms unused day long—never visited. To-night you'll go there."

She held her resolution against the consciousness of the other woman's scrutiny. And then, looking him over, she added: "You're hurt. Before you go we'd better fix that up. I'll get water—where are you wounded?"

He smiled at her so long that her pale face had to evade him. Then slowly he removed his coat, the waistcoat; then, with a single swift movement he tore the shirt from his shoulders, stripped it to his waist and raised his left arm. Across his swart side the upthrust of the knife had laid a six-inch wound —between the bloody lips you could well-nigh have placed the thickness of this book.

"Good God," the wife cried, "like this—you've said nothing!"

"My shoes," he said, with some concern, "are full of it—listen?"

The girl touched him: "Sit down," she spoke indifferently, "I'll get water." And when she had gone out, the wife sat across from him muttering: "You said a scratch—I did not ask—you said it was a scratch."

"No matter. A few ribs hacked up. He struck like a cat merely because I made him go back when he insisted on leaving. He hates me, it seems—the little beast-brother. He is quite beyond reason. Eh? —well? What could one expect of a little beast-brother?"

She got up, stung. Within the day she had been transformed—her luxurious sureness, ease, dominance, flicked out; her fears, hopes, passions now naked—a barbarian mother, a woman of the tribes.

Then Louise came back quietly with her basin from the rear house regions. She went directly to him, knelt and with a towel touched the gap the knife had plowed. The wife leaned to watch. The cloth in a minute was blood-soaked; she used then his shirt—it, too, was filled, but she sponged and cleaned the bulge of the flesh, he, meantime, with some new curiosity, looking down at her intent, then across at Demetra in her chair.

"I'm afraid it won't stop easily," Louise said. "It's not terribly deep, but your arm moving so keeps it bleeding, and it'll be hard to bandage."

"Do your best," he directed complacently.

She pressed the wound together, held it with the shirt fragment, then looked about. The other woman came to bend near. She had a horror of blood. Louise's quietness in the task was to her incredible. "Hold this," the Jew girl commanded, and Demetra placed her hand upon the bandage. "Stand up," Louise said, and he rose, lifted his arm and waited. He seemed huge with some enjoyment. A Roman of the days before Cæsar, back from a field with the triumph of a wound, could not have bulked higher among his slaves and women with their cloths and ointments than did he. The wife, her hand upon his side, trembled. The girl had knelt away from them;

she tore the hem of her underskirt from its encircling breadth.

"This will hold it," she reached the laced thing about him and about, binding it close and asking: "Is it tight—too tight?"

"No," he said, and then checked the tying of the knot and looked down at her. "A moment—why are you doing this?"

"You must get away," she answered composedly; "you can't lose any more blood."

"Beyond that," he went on—"what?"

"This Karasac," she retorted, "he must be got away. It's the first duty."

He grimaced: "I don't like that word—it's a dog's whine."

"O words—what matter!"

"Words are the most important matters. With them I am beating you two women into something you did not dream was in you. I am clearing the way for you—you will in the end thank me for your souls."

"Come on," said Louise patiently. "There's danger here."

The wife stood staring after them as he gravely offered his arm to the girl on the wet steps. When they had gone she stood looking at the blood and water on the floor.

CHAPTER XVI

AT midnight they were in Miss Hergov's flat in John Bride's block, wet all from the spring night blown with rain. Old John was with them, had waited, in fact, on the coping without Stephen's yard.

They had stilled him on the journey, but now as the four were about the cheap little round table in Miss Hergov's dining-room, John would out with it.

"I was trying to think—it's wonderfu'—this night! I canna believe but what ye lied."

"You're not called on to believe," retorted Rand. "Old man, still your clatter."

"I'm fair dazed. Louise will have to think for ye. She's takin' danger on her, but it's like her. It'd be a bad day the law had word of this. . . . The professor and his doctrines. . . . I'm guessing much."

Old John sat on the edge of a chair holding his hat and staring about. Three wet, dank men they were, watching the woman untangle the veil from her hat in the stuffy room opening on its white air shaft. "My word for it—this flat was never made for a biggish family."

"They are to stay in the kitchen," she answered. "It's safer and is little used. I'll put two cots there. There'll be plans to consider later—where you shall go, and how." She turned to Rand: "Is the man hungry?"

His eye went to Karasac by the wall, thin, mute, watching ceaselessly to make out the inexplicable thing. "The beast is hungry," retorted Rand. "Can't you see that? He's never been anything else but hungry. And anyhow, if he's lived the life of the road as I have, he'll know enough to eat when it's about whether he's hungry or not, against the day when food's lacking. Bring on your stuff, Jew girl—whatever it is."

She was shaking the water from her skirt hem. "John Bride," she said clearly, "will you keep an eye on the front of the house from your window now and then? And you can call me across the court from your flat when I'm needed. We'd best lock the door and answer no one while they're here."

Old John went to her, touched her shoulder. "Trust Brother John—I canna see all, but this I know—ye'r at a service for Stephen's good name and the state's, and the professor's grand work beyand—I can well guess the bigness to ye of it all!"

But old John was much bewildered; again he fumbled his hat, staring at the wounded two—Rand with his swagger, and Karasac, the rat, cornered, sullen. When she took them to the kitchen and showed them where, among its clean array, they

could make shift to sleep on the cots, John went out and to his own rooms across the hall. The girl left the two men here, sitting each on his bed looking at the other—across the gulf they looked one to the other.

But the mill-man would not speak and Rand could not endure silence. With his need of baiting whatever was about him he rose presently and went to the other. "Here, you," he began, "I can forgive everything except dullness. Your wounds are smarting, but so are mine. Tell me—what do you think of it all?"

The dynamiter grunted; he drew a sleeve across his dirty brow, brushing the black hair from his eyes; he cast on the other his perplexed disdain, the hate of class, the fear of the beaten: "Ah, Hell!" he said, "all dis—w'at?"

The bigger man turned away in some patient introspect. "Beast-brother, you've got to the bottom of it all in three words—you have at once upset all the philosophies. 'All dis—w'at?'" He tapped Karasac's arm. "It is distinctly good—better than any man has yet evolved."

But the other merely glowered, uncomprehending. Rand went to the window facing the diamond-shaped air space; he saw beyond another window, a shadow pass before it. He went to the door—it was locked. He tried to force it, and then, stepping back, he lowered his bull neck and swung his shoulder against the panels. The latch crashed out. He

tore the door open and went beyond, working himself free of the stableman's coat and throwing it aside. Miss Hergov hurrying from the rooms forward, met him as he was entering, pulling abruptly at the bandage below his arm to adjust it.

"You locked me in," he said; "I'm not used to that."

"No one must come upon you there," she answered. "You must stay hidden. I had only gone to find things to make you more comfortable."

"We're well enough—the beast and I. I'm going to sit here a while. I'd as soon be dead as unable to clatter my tongue, to exploit myself, celebrate the ego, to quarrel with the universe if I can get a word back. And you—you interest me—you are filled with conceits—you go about lugging what you're pleased to call duty, and a squalling, ungrateful brat it is—but beyond this stupidity you are a tissue of dreams."

She was perplexed. "Is this a time to talk?" she asked.

"Excellent. The night is not half done."

"Your cut," she added seriously. "I was searching for some peroxide of hydrogen and there is some medicated cotton—"

"Let it wait. It is a mere shallow gouge—a rib or two scarred up. The beast and I will dress each other's hurts. I'll teach him to."

"You'll be cold—you have no coat." And looking at him again in her serious intent, she went to the

chamber beyond and came back with a fluffy quilt of soft blue stuff—the sort of thing you would wrap about a baby's skin . . . strange enough to cover the swart bull aspect of a big man naked to the waist. She put it about his shoulders and sat across the round table from him as if guessing at his grave smile which now and then broke to open humor.

"Well," he bantered, "shall I thank you?"

"For what?"

"True. You've done nothing for me—because the blood was dripping from me. But for this fanfaronade of yours and the professor's—the brotherhood and the like—for this you'd martyr yourself. I have spent many a moment summing you up. You are harder to solve than most women who are ludicrously far from being the mysteries they imagine themselves, or as indispensable as they flatter themselves."

She regarded him with a pretense of ignoring.

"Come, now," he went on good-humoredly, from under his baby quilt of blue, "let us hear each other out. Let us look clearly behind each other's mask—or yours, for I wear none. To begin with—and then we can dismiss the matter for all time—you have the most astonishing eyes I have ever seen—beautiful, exquisite, unafraid. They look wide out on one, revealing, accusing, solacing. If there was a soul behind the skies in June when it stares down unclouded, I'd swear it would remind me of you."

"What sort of man are you?"

She had no word. He shifted his long legs under the table, and fell to scratching in a dirty paper for tobacco. "Your nose," he went on leisurely, "turns slightly. It is also too small. Your hair is a trifle coarse and heavy with a barbaric purple hardly pleasing. Your ears are fine, but over-large; your face, on the whole, not good-looking, and yet—" He eyed her with an indifferent intent. "Well, your figure is good. Your foot—which I saw once on the stair—had an ankle beautifully molded."

She drew it in. You could hear the fillip of her skirts.

"Well," he continued, "that is all. One may as well at the beginning let a woman know what he thinks of her looks, otherwise he'd never be done with her curiosity as to what he thinks. . . . Now we can go on and debate the eternal questions, and not ears or eyes or feet."

She glanced up with a pretense. "You," she said indifferently, "are preposterous!"

"Come, now," he reproved, "get away from the common ideas of your tribe. Why should I look you over, save as a man will judge a portrait or a bit of stone? The devil take you—if you're to be as common as that, I'll go back to the beast and start him yelping about how he hates me—the rich man's son."

"Go on, then," she murmured, "I'll listen—I can listen!"

"I fear not. You'll interrupt eternally. But here's

the case: Here you are, Louise Hergov, a Russian Jewess, apostate, exiled, obscure, coming up from the shops, living alone in a dingy Chicago flat, getting your breakfast over a gas stove and going each day to sit at a man's side, working, helping his soul to grow—for another. Year long seeing the light in his eyes, his breath on you at times, knowing that he feels your worth and knowing you're all the other woman is not—you, with your marvel of a soul, your mother feeling—here you've sat by the good you could not claim, not daring to lift your eyes lest he see what's burning in them. And here, now I come—I crush this hero-worship of yours with what? Merely a rant of words, a whim of mine to do something he does not dare. Yet you go working calmly on—you'll go hungry, loveless, all your life long. Eh? I wonder that you women do not take bombs and blow up something or other!"

Her eyes did not leave him; she had not lost a modulation of the voice. He went on softly: "Tell me—have I read you?"

"Why should I lie?" she answered. "You know me better than I can tell."

"Well," he went on airily, "if one does not have love, one should have the wit to do without it."

"There's a greater thing," she said. "O, yes—beyond—there's work—there's giving!" She turned to him intently: "I asked you to save Doctor Ennisley. You gave greatly. I, too, could do that. Oh, if the chance was given a woman! To have the feeling that

in your power his whole career lay, and the great cause beyond it, and that you gave simply, unknown, unrequited—and turned away! O, Rand—that was yours! And I had nothing to give—nothing! I begin to understand you. You're for ever seeking the finest—the rapture of a sentiment that's beyond other men."

"Comrade," he smiled, "I've lived most else and found it not worth while. Come on—let's live beyond them and their claptrap."

"Ah, don't!" she whispered, and now could not look at him. She laid her head upon the table in her arm, the wondrous, heavy hair by his hand. And then she lifted it and smiled wanly. "You are a sort of conscience to me—a devil pricking me to go hurt myself—to shatter my vanities. It's very late—hadn't you better go?" She smiled again as she rose. "Why me? There are others who deserve your tortures better."

"They are not worth the scourge. You—"

"Well?"

"Your eyes are marvelous with those tears in them."

She rubbed them out. "I thought," she answered, "that you saw no need of referring to them again."

"Your nose is infamously red," he continued studiedly.

Unsmiling, she sought her handkerchief. "And your hair is coming down. I told you once"—he spoke with his schoolmaster's air now—"to wear

always a flower in it. Here—on this side . . . a trifle higher up."

"It's ghastly to think of you," she muttered, "hidden—driven from your father's house—your inheritance lost—your position—name—everything. . . . And here, wounded—without a shirt to your back—without a friend except the beast who stabbed you—whom you're saving!"

"I congratulate you. There are few who'd have the sense to see the extraordinary quality of it. The entire episode is, indeed, a jewel. I hold it up—I juggle it—it flashes from many facets. I shall wear it with the air of a man who's won the Victoria Cross. I shall take it sometime before my God and whistle up to Him: "Look here what I've got!"

She seemed not to hear. Presently, from her reverie, she went on slowly. "I wonder if a thought ever comes to you of what you might have been? The master of the mills—the priceless chance for good—to give to thousands for all time a chance at life—a better life—hope—love? O, to be rich, to have the master's feeling—the power to make life mean so much! Power—power—that's it—power!"

She looked at him, his smile, his ironic pity. It seemed within her soul a dream was fading. She could not tell from whence this great grief came—what dark upon the light that had led her on in courage to the work of all the days.

He was about to go, uprising to drag the blue little quilt from his brown shoulders. "Who'll get

breakfast?" he said abruptly. "He'll be hungry, the little beast-brother will be hungry, and so shall I. See here, we don't know what the day will bring, eh—do we? Well, I'd like lamb chops and rolls and chocolate—a sudden fancy has seized me. Get them for breakfast. . . . I will assume that the beast-brother likes lamb chops—get them for us some way or other."

She followed him, murmuring. "Yes, yes." And then she stopped him with her hand on his arm. "You can't rest this way. Your wound's still bleeding some—see here! It needs attention—an antiseptic."

He sat down. For half an hour she washed and pressed and bound the wound, seeming to linger, at times, with little questionings, over the task.

CHAPTER XVII

SHE came to her work the next morning, outwardly the same, the secretary of a busy man at the left of his desk in the study across the hall from the living-room.

The place seemed deserted. There was about it in this month of young odors of the earth, and its springing life, the terrible beauty of a day after the death of one beloved. You move, then, as one apart through familiar environs whose forms appear now oddly acute; you wonder at your sensibility to the insistent all-enveloping quality of the yellow sunshine—it sleeps on a well-known wall, a tree, a path, with a beautified actuality; peace breathes from all, as though the world had enlarged for some ineffable, sweet intrusion; sea, sky and land indeed, speak the new ordination. It is as though the universe had loosed a dimension noble enough for grief, measureless enough for its solace, and was waiting tranquilly for you to step again with its progression after this moment's flash of the lesser reality, to go once more in the common and mystic patience and fortitude of life to its end.

It was from this spell that Corbett came after a

sleepless night. The servants had not stirred as he went along the checked walk by the budding elms, all gray and misty in the spring cool, the sparrows chirruping; he walked from the ordered park along a sweep of rough and treeless ground reaching out to the great warehouses and slips of the city front, before him the east banked with slow-moving cloud washed with a blur of rain above the lake; but in all this fine sanity found nothing, and so came back again across the precise boulevards of the north side to Rand's home.

The city was awakening then, burring to the south like a mighty mill under its ever-flexing smoke cloud. When Corbett came through the lawn paths to the side door he found his wife at the dining-room window, reaching to free the first grimy sweet tendrils of naked jessamine twisting in the decayed bricks.

"I did not hear you go out," she said; "it must have been early."

"I could not sleep—Demetra—at all."

They looked at each other; they were, indeed, worn. She muttered, as though her control had slipped at sight of him: "Corbett, there's a horror in this. O, we shall not sleep!"

He came to her and said gravely: "See here, we can't go on this way. We can't let it sit on us. Rand, the devil, he never saw this boy before, but this is like him. If I were to sum up the spirit of America —its money lust, its brutish humor, its ruthlessness —I'd point to that man's face."

"He gave up all," she answered.

"Yes, the swaggerer—the actor—it delighted his grotesque soul."

"No matter," the wife went on; "I suppose we're safe now if he gets Karasac away. They went last night to John Bride's with Louise."

Corbett started: "How could she? It isn't safe." He seemed dazed again: "Louise—she's known as a socialist—Altmayer, Markey—all the city leaders know her, and she's my secretary. The girl, in her quiet way, has encouraged them—she's even written a bit for the *Voice*. She shouldn't have anything to do with Karasac, an anarchist."

"I suppose," the wife continued, "it was to save you."

He winced. She was not looking at him, and he went on nervously: "O, the girl! It's like her. She's borne many a hard lick for me one way and another. Rand ought to know what's in her. He's always jeering about the lack of soul in women—that they can't give greatly without love—he should know that girl, what she's capable of!"

The wife stirred; she sank her fists together and said—and it was like the shapping of a bar of steel: "You did not speak—you did not speak!"

"Demetra," he muttered, his eyes taking on their hunted look, "were you waiting for that? It was of you I was thinking—you and my little Tad—and the great work beyond. It shook me—unnerved me. It seemed as if a vision of all America was before

me—what it shall be—the place where all the peoples will work out the problem—the failed and defeated—the drift of all the races—the toilers and the oppressed. Russians, Jews, Slavs, Germans, Poles—your own people, Demetra—it seemed as if the whole tide of inpouring life was to be judged in me—and if I failed—failed—"

"Yes," she answered patiently, "I know all that. I've heard you tell of it before."

He came to take her hand. "Demetra, listen here. If I was charged with inciting violence—if they fixed this thing on me from my talks to the mill-men—if I was dishonored and had to give everything up—my place at the university—*everything*—dear, would you stand by me?"

She turned from him; she cried in a sort of passion. "O, if it would happen!"

"If it would happen, Demetra!"

She strode from him to the sunlit window—she burst back on him. "If you would let us be great, we women! Only that—give what is best in us!"

He was astonished. To his attempt to speak, she broke in. "To give what is best—you, your position in the world; I—well, I married you for peace—rest. O, I can give that!"

He watched her uncomprehending, and muttered: "To give my work in the world?"

And on his amazed study, she came again with her new, moving sharpness: "Corbett, have I failed

in anything? I've hurt you—I've disappointed you —as a wife!"

He drew her hand to his, the old hunger for her in his eyes, the pathos of the idealist, the lover, year by year learning that there is no enchantment. "Dear heart, what is the mystery about you? It's in all our love. I look into your eyes as one would a temple—"

"A temple? Corbett!"

"A place in your soul to which you go alone." He drew her closer, in his old fond eagerness. "And always, outside, I'm waiting. . . . Ah, can't you see—what I want to see?"

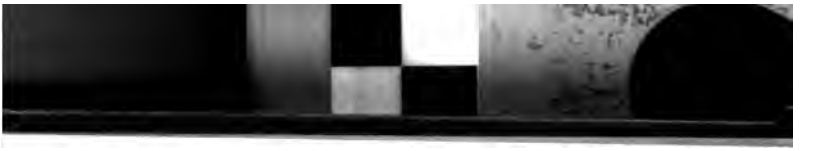
"What?" she muttered.

"A great love there for me."

She moved a little in his arms, her eyes flitted. "And you think I've not given all—a great love, Corbett?"

"There's something—a mystery, dear."

She drew from him after his gentle pause; and then, as one recovering from a reverie which had a sweetness and a pain, she laughed slightly. "Corbett, there's always a temple in a woman's soul, a shrine to which she goes alone. That is the mystery—why she must always go alone with her dreams, her loves and look at them in silence. Yes, to turn them over and judge them, and only the best and purest can she leave there. Perhaps all her life long she's nothing to bring—she finds nothing, and the temple's empty. Or there comes a child, or a



great ambition for some one, the man she loves—something proves itself the highest and the best. . . . Or perhaps there's but a memory, a dream, and the temple's empty her life long."

He asked after a while, gently as before, his tired eyes on her. "Dear heart—is yours?"

"How can a woman tell?" she murmured; and he was hurt. She saw it; she went on: "One must be great to find the great way. And we are not, Corbett. O, we've not proved anything!"

"I'll find the way," he whispered. "It seems I was never so close to you, Demetra, as now. I'll find the way."

"Suppose," she answered, turning in a new intent on him, "there was a way?"

"I'd take it, dear; I love you so. Our ways of life have been different, but I love you so!"

"You've trusted me," she whispered, and put her hands about his neck as she sat on the chair's arm, "all the old doubts—the things women whisper of each other—you've trusted me."

"Demetra!" He had clasped her, checking his feeling with his kiss.

"Ah, well, let's be frank. You've tried to shield me, but these women of your college crowd—well, I suppose our lives have been apart."

"Dear, you've been unhappy?"

"No," she smiled, "you've done all a man could do." She suddenly slipped into his arms, drawing back his head to look deep into his wondering hurt

eyes. "Corbett, you've a name—a future. Could you give it up for me?"

"For you, Demetra?"

"For me. To go away—alone—beaten—a failure."

He held her off, astounded: "Failed?—for you?"

"Yes, would that be happiness?"

"Happiness? To fail? To give up everything?" His dreamer's eyes marveled. He could not understand her stealth, her leaning, her caress.

"To step beyond happiness, then, if that was the price of the brotherhood."

He sat back more amazed. "Demetra, the brotherhood? I can't understand—a woman doesn't care for that—the bigger things."

She, too, drew away. She rose and turned. "You, also, tell us that! O, do you think that at love a woman stops and dwells?"

He could not answer for his staring at her. She seemed taller, hardening, rising before him, her eyes wide, dark in a sort of horror. He stepped toward her, muttering inarticulately her name, and she drew off.

"I think I know, now," she retorted, and he saw in her eyes some cruel thing—it was as if she had thrust him from her.

And as they stood, she by the window with its woods' smell of spring, the ineffable sweetness of morning's inconsequentiality, the dew dripping from the eaves, the sparrows twittering, the level sun

across the velvet grass, Louise came along the hall unannounced, in the freedom she had in this house. They saw her go to the study and remove her veil, and, as usual, pick up the mail and arrange a paper or two. Her face was composed, pale, but that was her way. The wife looked greedily upon her about her first little affairs of the desk. Then, while Corbett still stood in his bitterness, she hurried to the room. The secretary turned at the noise to find her touching the desk.

"Louise," the wife said sharply. "Rand—is he still there?"

"Yes." The girl's eyes steadily looked back. "Still there."

"His wound? How is that? How did he sleep—tell me!"

The husband had followed. He listened, and after a look at him, briefly and without greeting, and seeming to have in it a dismissal such as Demetra's words had borne, Louise went on shortly: "He's sore and tired—but well. They—I got them breakfast."

"Rand," the wife pursued, "didn't he say?—send nothing—no message?"

"Message?" The girl's blue eyes widened: "What would he—and to you?"

The wife turned, speaking through her teeth as a woman will do holding thread in them. "No—of course not—nothing!"

Then she went out, leaving them constrained.

"You took them in, Louise," the doctor said nervously. "It was fine! If they'd been on the street they'd have been arrested. You saved them."

"It was not for that," she answered—"you—your work. The week after next you are to dine at the White House, I remember."

"Yes, the world's work—that's the first thing," he answered.

"Yes," she repeated briefly; "the first thing." But she became confused then, in some trivial explanation of the mail, and he stood stupidly trying to assist. It was as if each was trying to hide from the other what each knew the other knew—as if, together, they struggled piteously to keep a faith from breaking, a hope and splendor from being crushed—as if in their souls they writhed, unable to save the thing—his manhood, her loyalty, the flame of their bright ardor.

"Good God!" he found himself groaning, for it was wrung from him—"this thing—when will it end?"

She had motioned. Through the open window they saw Stephen coming slowly about the corner of the house on the ancient walk. The old man was bent, leaning on his stick; his face was pitted, livid, eaten with aging, his eyes blue, sunken. He seemed a dwarf shrunken from the frail dignity of yesterday, the justice. Before the window he saw them and smiled up wanly—a curious thing, indeed, for him.

"The air," he said, "is cool. And I slept little, Doctor."

"We did not sleep," Corbett answered. "I think no one."

The father smiled again his patience. "An old machine fast playing out," he murmured, and went slowly on, "fast playing out."

The man within extended his hand, but the old judge did not see it on his groping way. The wife at the other window of the dining-room was looking out—they could see her face set upon the ambling figure along the dew-wet grass. They stared across at her and she at them. Then she disappeared, and a moment later they heard her step flying across the hall and she was with them in the study, by them at the window, pointing out.

"You heard?" she said; "he did not sleep last night—he drove away his son!"

"Yes—yes," the man retorted; "good God, be still!"

He looked from her to Louise, then his haunted eyes shot from both of them. He had been one to seek eager as a child for praise of women, their faiths behind him, their hands awaiting to bind his hurts, their courage to send him on again. And now these two stood mute, evading.

"The thing is on us all," the wife muttered; "we've killed something!"

CHAPTER XVIII

AFTER that the thing lay between them like a sword in their bed. At night, after dinner in the little room, with his fond, foolish mother querulously asking of his abstraction, Corbett did not look at the wife nor speak more than the essentials for the mask. He went away at eight, nor did they know the hours he strode the shore along the troubled lake with its fitful winds of spring and found no surcease from his thoughts—nothing.

Louise came for the usual hour with his correspondence after dinner and waited, clearing up the remnants of the day's work.

But as the doctor did not return, the wife came to the study and said that she need not wait.

"But Professor Ennisley made the appointment to-night. His club address is to be worked over," the secretary answered resolutely, and Demetra looked sharply at her.

"What is the haste?" she retorted, and then muttered: "Louise, you are so calm. Can you imagine things ever being like they were before?"

"What else can there be? To work—that's all."

"Ah, well—how easily we take it! That boy, and Rand. Tell me, how did you leave them?"

The girl looked coolly at her. "Why should you ask? They eat and sleep a deal, and quarrel. The mill-man curses him, and he is patient."

"Rand—patient?"

"Yes. And kind—like a big brother to a child, good-humored and patient."

"But, Louise," pursued the wife swiftly, "you hate him, don't you?"

Louise evaded: "No, I can't say that. No—I think he plays with us all."

"That's it," the other retorted. "He plays with you. He couldn't care for you—it's not possible!"

The girl started at the wife's greedy eyes. "For me? How silly!"

"Ah, well. I've seen you look at him so curiously! A man who'd do as he's done when he held us all in the hollow of his hand. It's the sort of thing a girl would idealize. We're not so far from the barbarian that we can't see that—his great savage way! And you—you're given to dreaming." Then she cried in a sort of fury: "Louise, you're so changed! You used to stand before my husband with something wonderful in your eyes. And now Rand's come. You took him in—endured him, fed him, washed his wounds—"

The girl rose, her face pale. "I'm going now. You're not yourself."

"Be still, he's coming," the wife whispered; "yes, you loved him, and Rand pricked the bubble! Be still!"

For Corbett came out of the shadows of the veranda and the night. He saw them, and smiled wanly: "Demetra? How are you, dear?"

His voice was not that in which he used to ask, cheerily, rushing buoyantly from his work to the home's solacing—now he asked wearily, as one does a duty.

"Well," she answered, and he went on in the same mechanical mutter: "I'd forgotten. I've tried to work to-day—plunge in big—" then he seemed to realize for the first time that Louise was by the door— "Why, you—it's late, girl!"

"I was going," she answered. "I've waited two hours for you."

He stared at her evasiveness. It seemed that the tone of every voice he knew was changed—they were lifeless, acrid, brief, where once they had been like the flowing of fresh waters to bear him on.

"There's a little work," he added stonily; and she responded with a hollow pretense: "Yes—some letters. . . . And your address before the Equality Club—*The Brother Keeper*, I think you were to call it. We'd better work. You deliver it to-morrow night."

He looked strangely at her as she went back to the study, taking off again her hat and coat. Yes, that was the name he had given it. It was one of his brilliant and audacious effusions with its trace of phantasy, of imagining, of easy sophistry, even in the title.

"The Brother Keeper," repeated the wife, and he found himself between the two, both looking at him. He began an awkward jest at the stubborn type-writer ribbon, offering to help Louise with it. But she said clearly: "Let us work and be through."

He found again on him her astonishing blue eyes, full, quiet, impenetrable . . . but their splendor gone, their great faiths dead. He discovered that his hand shook on the manuscript, as he went on, confused:

"Let's see—page thirty-four—that's where we left off . . . we won't bother with much to-night."

The wife left them. She opened the door and went out, but the rain was falling and blowing in the width of the veranda, so she went in again, and along the narrow hall to the main portion of the house. It was, as ever, untenanted, the master's aversion to lights of stricter observance than before. But when the woman reached the front landing, she saw a light in the library. She went on unthinkingly enough, and reached the threshold, and there stood still, checking a cry.

For Rand had risen. It was as if an apparition had appeared—he, before a huge chair, with a book in his hand. He wore a shirt and tie, procured somehow or other. He looked at her dryly.

"You—here!" she cried— "dared come back?"

"Doubtless. I never thought of that—daring to

come. Eh?—there was a book here I wished to get at a moment—something that seemed to be Montaigne had been rapping in my head—"

"Your father forbade you—" she put in.

"That would be an excellent reason for coming, if I needed one. In fact, a part of the persistent obstinacy I have in living when the world would long since have consigned me to perdition. I am not wanted—therefore, I go planting my presence. . . . I am ignored—therefore, I go about yelling in their faces. I am not a relish to the feast."

"But how—" she whispered— "did you get here?"

"The front way—I have my keys—got them a week ago from the rooms. And I knew no servants are about this portion—they smell ghosts here."

"Ah, well!" She turned from his inconsequential and sonorous voice— "Here—again. You will wreck us all yet! I thought you'd stay away."

"I was bored a bit. Eh?—that brother of yours —an extraordinary fellow, but I have sounded him. His philosophy is good, but I can't get him to enlarge on it. 'All dis—w'at?' says he, but he will not expound it further. Your brother, the beast, has no relief from his profundity. I play the fool before him—I exhaust my wit—I coddle and cajole him —I tickle him with the very button of fancy, and he merely retires to his tub and curses me and my diversions. Eh?—I, the brother . . . the well-beloved of men."

"Will you stop?" she said. "Have you come to torture me?"

"I move you? You are far too comfortable a creature—fed, warm, filled—"

She was calm now—hate or love seemed puny weapons to bring against him. "I know you so well," she said, "it's not worth while to listen."

"There you have me. To find none to listen would be the only misfortune I could name. If they want a hell for me let that be it."

"You're not safe here," she muttered, and she looked about and went to draw the curtains: "It's late—very late."

"The better. Let us sit down and discuss you—or rather myself. I'm a deal more interesting. I have never yet got to the bottom of the problem. But you women—eh?—you are like a wheel of fortune—a bewildering array of colors and devices and numbers spinning brilliantly . . . but put your hand on it, stop it, read it coldly, there is nothing to amaze one."

She stood erect, silent, regarding his round heavy face, the gray unlit eyes always on her, the swiftly moving mobile lips—she sank back to a chair with something like a sigh.

"Your wound," she said at last— "and that boy out in the dark—you've haunted us—the thought of you!"

"I am doing well. We've eaten well—and sleep. It is a famous place to sleep—the cubby she put us

in—she? By the way—her name?—it's slipped from me."

"Miss Hergow," she answered indifferently.

"There is about her a great possibility. I have begun to believe again—"

"What?" she put in sharply.

"A marvel. She loved your husband—a weakness, but what of it? The marvel is not that, for you women are for ever yearning after what you've not—and he's big in her world—she, sitting always at his feet—but the wonder was to see her face the thing—to admit it, reason it calmly out, put it on the back and put it in its place. Once I laid a day and night in a Brazilian forest, fighting the heat and fever, tortured with insects, sunk in muck to my neck to await the unfolding of a rare and exquisite lily the natives told me of. And alone—slowly, in the moonlight of the second night—it came. I think I could so await the soul of Louise."

The wife's face set stonily. "There's something monstrous about you. You'd better go. But one thing I'd like to ask—my brother—what of him?"

He lifted his hand airily: "The beast is mine to make or break—another piece of clay to potter with—to see what can be made out of such dull stuff."

"He's my brother."

"He's my beast."

She leaped to her feet. "Do you play with us all? My husband—he's crushed by this thing—he's living in an agony; your father—it has killed

him as it were in the night. And I—my life—my soul—"

He leaned forth as does a physician to whom a patient has revealed a telling symptom; he rubbed his fingers slightly. His rich voice had the fullness of encompassing and all-wise pity: "A soul?" he murmured: "That would be well worth waiting for!"

She had not heard, it seemed, in her bitterness. "And you came back," she cried, "to play the actor, to outrage and defy! You're filled with the magnificence of all this—that you, of all men, could give up your place, money, honor—love—could take a stranger—a pitiful hunted boy by the hand and save him—call him 'brother!' Yes—" she stepped to him, and he saw the set and light of her eyes— "I see at last—all a conceit—a magnificent vanity—that is your whole life—to have men hate you—to make women fear—an incredible vanity!"

He looked at her apparently in some concern. "My dear," he said mildly, "you are splendid—repeat it."

But she was beyond reason—she cried on his words: "That's nothing! Only for love are men great . . . you've given nothing after all—done nothing! Are capable of nothing! I'll show you what a man can do—what love can tell him to do!"

"Love?" he said with some dry surprise: "Then what?"

"You've said no woman is great enough for you

—to go beyond her happiness—to be all—give all! Well, I shall demand that—give that sacrifice."

"You're like an admirable barbarian. Sacrifice?" He rose to look at her— "A woman? You—give what, eh?"

"O, it's hateful that we kept silent! I'll tell him all!"

"Your husband? Tell him Karasac's your brother?"

She went on slowly, as one gathering strength for her resolves: "He loves me—he'll do this. What you've done for vanity, he'll do because he loves me."

He shrugged his shoulders, regarding her easily. "He'll not speak—not he!"

"Love shall speak for him. Here, in this house—this very night—I'll tell him, and he shall tell Judge Rand. Yes, he'll confess it to all the world if need be, that I—Demetra, his wife—a foreign woman—am sister to Karasac, the anarchist."

"For love of you?"

"For the great love!" She hurried on as if in a new and mighty pride, "I know now—I know you both. O, he's doubted—he thinks—he wishes to possess me wholly! Yes, this will try him."

"Let us be frank," Rand went on. "It is an interesting problem; it has, indeed, diverted me. He sees in you a dream—a memory?—he does not know that I'm the man . . . you dared not trust that to him—that once you loved me?"

She looked at him with fresh aroused disdain: "A child—a child once loved you—no more than a child. And, yes—I'll tell him that, now—I'll heap upon him all that a man can endure for the woman he loves. He shall be great enough for that."

Rand smiled: "He does not dare!"

"And if he does not," the wife retorted, "here, this very night, take Karasac for brother—yes, for love of me—hide him, protect him, acknowledge, if it comes to that, that I, his wife, am sister to the mill-boy—if he does not do this, I'll leave this house for ever!" She looked coldly at him, her dark eyes without a flitting, without fear; she gathered her skirts closer and went out of the room: "We shall accept," she said back at him from the hall— "we, too, can accept!"

He heard her footfall hasten, die away; and, as if held by it, stole nearer the door to listen, his heavy face, under the single lamp-glow, lit, intent, absorbed, the small eyes shifting here and there. If mask he wore it had, for the moment, slipped. He leaned forth listening, as if his soul had followed her. Then, presently, he took his hat and left the house.

CHAPTER XIX

THE wife came back to the living-room where the little round clock of crystal ticked insistently, and where, now, the old woman sat sleepily with her sewing. To Demetra's brief surprise the mother answered: "I thought I'd wait. My boy's worriet so. The type-writer girl went away and then him, too, after a bit. Seems like he's possessed these days with worryin' so."

The wife sat by the window, looking out, listening to the rhythmic clock whose beat caught her fancy, seeming to regularize her purposes, to clear her brain, to calm her passion. She could see it, a globe of glass containing the dial and held up by a grotesque hand of green copper from the pedestal—a sphere shot with iridescent tremors, like the turn of a trout in clear water, a magician's crystal held to the light. And it ticked, ticked, an infinite patient business on the still night.

Nearer, by the table, sat Corbett's mother, sleepy, a wisp of her thin gray hair caught in the chair back, pitiable, betraying baldness, a cheap comb sticking askew, lacking the wizardry of women's care, revealing her whole life's need of that nicety,

the intricate wisdom of the body on which women evolve distinction. This inutile dowdiness and feminine poverty held the wife's eye. It contrasted pregnantly with her own eloquent completion of self, her irradiation of personality. It struck her as odd that now, of all moments, she should feel an ardent pity for the other—and as always, when she was moved to act, her course was direct, she rose and came to the back of the chair.

"Mother, your comb is out—shan't I fix your hair?"

The old woman started. Before her confused answer she felt the slim, cool fingers in her hair. "Why, so 'tis," she quavered in her foolish deprecation. "I must a-slept—I was that beat out. But my hair—it ain't worth much bother."

But she resigned herself with a fluttering happiness. "I'll take it down and do it for the night," the other went on, "and you must go to bed—it's very late for you."

"My boy," she answered— "I'd rather wait." That was always her cry—the matter she came back to. The wife dwelt on it, and continued: "It may be very late. But let me fix your hair. Here—see this? It must have been pretty, wasn't it? Mother, it's pretty, now!"

The old woman cackled diffidently, sitting back in this new pleasure at the touch of the swift, deft hands. Once within the other room the child coughed, and they paused and commented, and then

went on, listening to the nurse's stir, a glimpse of her in a blue and white checked gown about the green-shaded lamp, a mosaic inlaid in the open door.

"I expect I can't wait up," the mother went on—"he's such a busy man. Did you ever think he'd be so big when you married him three years ago?"

"Yes," the wife answered clearly, "one couldn't fail to see it—he had that about him—a wonderful capacity for work and a dashing way of making himself believed—of seeming to be true."

"Seemin'?" queried the mother, oddly struck.

"You see, I mean personality—the impression he'd give out to a stranger. That is the secret of his power, mother."

"Mebbe," the old lady did not understand analysis: "But *seemin'* true? He wa'nt ever anythin' else."

The wife drew her breath sharply: "Yes, but some men with the truth in them have to fight vainly all their lives for the hearing that Corbett wins simply by his charm—his personality, his openness—"

"It's just him," the mother affirmed. "He allus was so. Just open, fine and brave—I brung him so."

"Mother," the wife went on, "if he was hurt in men's eyes—discredited—caught in anything—it would break your heart?"

"No," she answered proudly, "not if he come told me. I'd never believe unless he come told me and then I'd send him on again cleared of it all—for-

given." She looked about solemnly over her glasses: "He'd come put his head down here, and then no disgrace'd count. If he was despised of all men it wa'nt matter—so's I *knew*. I'd send him out again —we'd be like we was before he rose—we was all so happy and so pore."

The wife's face changed—the other could not see. "There—there," she whispered, and gave the old head a little pat, and then her voice broke curiously, odd, surcharged— "O, little mother, believe that of me, also—always!" The grizzled woman felt the other's arms, a quick warm clasp; she could not see or understand—she murmured fondly, foolish, in bewildered happiness: "Demetry—dear heart—"

For never had they been so—never had they clasped each other. And then the wife went swiftly from the room. The old woman looked about and got up, feeling of her braids. She stared at the dim chamber door, at the clock, an iridescent globe against the curtains. She waddled to the hall and called: "Daughter! Daughter!" Then she came back confused, fluttering, a great vague hope of what she knew not, trembling in her brain. She went on to her room uncertainly muttering, lifting the strand of her frayed gray hair to touch it, to find the perfume of the other woman's fingers.

It was after midnight when Ennisley returned, and a misshapen moon had arisen to glimmer through the eastward windows of the living-room

where a fire had burned low, for the April night was cool. A light beyond in the chamber showed a figure by the child's bed. Thinking it the nurse, he came to the door and said softly: "Ellen? The boy —asleep?"

The woman rose. He stifled a joyful whispering at her upraised hand: "Demetra! It's you?"

"Yes," she said, and came out to the living-room.

"My boy," he added seriously, "you with him, Demetra? He's not sick?—Ellen, where's she?"

"I sent the nurse to bed . . . she was tired out." She watched him listening at the child's door.

"My little Tad," he murmured in the self-reproof of the hurried father, "and you—caring for him!"

He had not known of this before—it seemed, some way, a marvel. He could not know that she had been groping piteously for him the night long, reaching out to build again, to uprear faith in him, to find there whatever fragments of treasure were left her. They stood now across the room from each other, and she turned up the dim light.

"Demetra!" he followed her a step. "You're up, dressed—and it's very late."

She had wont to be indifferent to his comings and goings, his vigils, ardors, and his outer life. He had often found her idling in a dressing-gown when he had come back late, but it was her choosing and not to ask of his battles and his weariednesses.

"Yes," she went on again. "I waited. I wanted to think."

"Demetra, you're strange. What is it?"

She went to draw the curtains; then faced him.

"Never mind—I'll tell you in time. Sit down. I remember now, that this was the night of the Equality Club dinner—the Auditorium, wasn't it? How did it go?"

"Fine. I spoke almost thirty minutes, I'm afraid, but I could have gone on for ever. There were some men there I wanted to reach—Covington of the Manufacturers' Association, and Senator Brown and McCall, president of the United Glass Workers—a curious lot—every element of our industrial life brought together. It seemed like all America was facing me—and it didn't matter that most of them were hostile. I made 'em listen! Roderman said I never spoke better."

"I know," she answered, used of old to all this frank, fine boy's ardor— "I thought it would be good—I read it."

"You? Read it!"

"To-night—the copy that lay on your desk. *The Brother Keeper*—it was fine."

He was surprised. She had never cared for his work. He went on a trifle confused: "A little far-fetched—that name on it."

"It was good." She sat down and looked across at him: "Corbett, here's a chair."

He obeyed her gesture, pulling at his brown beard, perplexed. To cover it, he continued: "Dear, it seemed when I was speaking, with the applause I

made them give me—that I'd forgotten. That we were back a week ago, before this—this thing happened . . . Rand and the boy."

"Tell me," she answered, "how does it stand? Do you hope to escape it now?"

"I think so. The rioting at the mills is over. The police have the conspirators, except this Karasac. If they don't get him, I think we're safe . . . if Rand gets him away. And the judge—ah, God—that hurts! But he's not turned from me—even with Hayes trying to poison his mind against me, the judge is patient—giving me another show to go on with the work."

Her calm, her ceaseless watching, seemed to be on him. It was not her old idling indifference, her cat-like ease and tolerance.

He studied her an instant, then revolved his own thought—always he went back to it, even now when the night's triumphant glow had put it from him: "Rand—that's a strange thing! His taking this friendless boy. . . . Somehow, it's magnificent!"

She leaned to him, her elbow on her knee. He saw the glint of their wedding-ring pressed to the soft mold of her chin. She asked merely: "Could you be that?"

"Be what?"

"Magnificent?"

He sat back, his dreamer's eyes raised afar, the fine contour of his pointed beard and face distinct to her. He thought slowly and from this he spoke:

"To swagger through life—to mock men, society—its shams and cruelties. To be the outcast from all this—the actor in an impossible part—the man beyond the common feeling. No, I'm not like that, I'm afraid."

"To be all—to give all?"

He rose—he was big with it—the idealist could see—the thing could lift him.

"For one thing. . . . Yes—my work."

"Yes—the social regeneration—the dawn of the new day, I think I've heard you call it—your brotherhood. Something to do with books and lecturing, it seems to me. But for a man—a beaten man—a beast, hated—feared. See here!—for that could you go beyond your happiness—your life work?"

He turned to listen at her intent voice. After a moment he started slightly. "Beyond happiness? That's Rand's idea of something or other. Demetra, what do you mean?"

She regarded him clearly: "I'm asking a great thing of you."

For a time they were still. His glance did not flinch from hers.

"I know what you mean—I can read it in your eyes."

"To take this mill-boy by the hand—shelter him—save him—and if you must, proclaim to all the land that he's your pupil—that it was what you taught him which first raised him to even the little

light he has. He came to you—he called you brother."

The husband stirred a little. "You know what it would be for us—absolute ruin."

"Rand took it."

"Yes, always the *poseur*. I saw that clearly, he loved to play the part."

"No matter, he saved you." She struck her fists together: "O, God—if you had spoken!"

He crouched forward as if struck, indeed; he lifted the brown curls from his damp brow: "Demetra, I've seen this in you two days now. In you and in Louise—your looks on me. It's been an agony, and now you out with it—you ask me to confess to Karasac."

"To get him away—to confess; then, to go out despised—failed." She stopped and then, mechanically, she muttered: "Rand did."

He whirled in a sort of fury: "Rand—always Rand!"

She raised her head: "This I know—he hates wrong—he does not fear."

"I'm fighting, too, a bigger fight and differently. What's all his wild talk—what can it amount to?"

She nodded: "What, indeed? Only this I know—he saved you." And she went on slowly: "Saved me, also; that's the bitterest of it."

"Ah, I know, dear. I'd save you the smallest grief. I'd give up anything to brighten a day of your life—I love you so!"

"There's but one way to save me."

He looked at her quietness in a strange awe. She went on steadfastly: "One way—you must be great as he!"

"Great? An actor—an impossible figure!"

"No matter. You shall do for love what he did for vanity, Corbett!" She had risen, her dark eyes shining, her faith, her fullness of confidence in her power over him— "As great as he!"

"Demetra! How can the thing appear so to you?"

"Do you think I'll have him go all his life long thinking I dared not speak? . . . that you dared not!" And she put both hands upon his shoulders and pressed him back. "I'll tell you, Corbett, and you shall tell all the world if needs be, that Karasac is my brother."

"Brother?" He simply sat in wonder.

"I've told you much," she added slowly, still from the calm that awed him. "You knew me when you married me—a girl come from the people—a child who could remember little of the Polish village where she grew. Well, you know of my coming to America. It seems my family followed—they were people of the mills and mines—I hardly know where, but this mill-hand recognized me the night he came —Ludovic, brother. The others, I hardly knew— mere babies in the old days . . . but they ended it all in Rand's mills. And Ludovic knew me. He spoke that night, hardly a week ago. Good God, how long it seems!"

"Your brother? And I taught him in the mill school? It's strange—" and then he turned swiftly on her— "Rand—he knew this? He did it to save *you!*" He sat as one dulled, the real import held from him.

The move of her head might have been assent—hope. She muttered: "He shall not go all his life thinking I dared not speak."

And then, with her leaning to him, a pleading, a passion, a threat—her voice breaking: "You'll do this, Corbett! You'll bring him back to his place—his father—you'll take this thing on you!"

He was still. And presently he said quietly: "I think I see. You want to save him, Demetra—that's it."

She drew proudly back: "A bigger thing—to prove you. Come, we can be calm—we can talk this over, Corbett. It's hateful that we dared not speak. Come, we can do this!"

But her calm was a menace; she blurted on with it: "As God lives, Stephen Rand shall judge us. This mill-man you lifted to what little light he got —I, his sister. As God lives, you shall tell him all, and he's to judge!"

He looked off above her; he took mechanically from his pocket the manuscript of his last speech; he looked at it unrolling, the blue type, the marginal notes. "And on me," he muttered, "the blow will come. I married the anarchist's sister—I taught him—he came to *me!*" It seemed the land out in

the dark was the land of dreams—a bubble that a breath might burst. "You can't understand. . . . If the justice turned on me—sent me away—"

"You shall go—if he despises you—you shall accept!"

"I can't."

She was on him with a tiger's swiftness, clutching him, her breath on his, striking his knees, her eyes brilliant, staring. "For me," she cried, "Corbett, because you love me!"

"Yes, and for that I'd keep this thing from you—protect you—conceal it all my life long—because I love you."

"There's a greater way," she was calm again. "Love can make a man great beyond himself—that only!"

"Love? Dear heart—it's ruin."

"Rand took it."

"Look here," he whispered, staring wildly at her, paling: "Rand—yes—for you . . . he loves you."

She laughed wildly; and a cry broke from him. He whirled up from her grasp. "Demetra, I'm finding the way now! Rand—your old life abroad? You told me once that a man took you, a child. You admitted—" He seized her hands, stung with the truth. "Always I've seemed to see a playing between you! Rand—he's the man—he knows everything!"

"He is the man," she retorted.

He recoiled, lifting a shaking finger to her composure. "A child—and he took you—sent you to school—gave you your chance at life—you've told me all this . . . but it was *Rand!* And you never forgot him!"

"Never."

His brain was at white heat, catching at the flashing colors of her life, fitting them to a pattern, burning them beyond erasure. "And you'd confess the thing to save him—save him!" He cried out again with his stinging intuition: "To save him—you love him!"

She smiled drearily: "To save him, then," she went on, standing now, composed, before him. "If you do not do this thing to-night—tell Judge Rand all—I shall leave this house for ever."

"With him?" the husband cried.

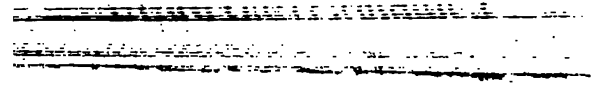
"Alone."

"You shall not stir," he muttered, the veins on his white brow beating as he wiped his head: "There's a child to be born to you. It's mine—and you shall not disgrace it."

"Well," she went on pitilessly, "it shall not be born here, under this roof—no—never—nor with you near—never—never!"

He stood as in a dream; she knew what his infinite tenderness had meant—his visions of the race-child, the mingling of their variant blood for this passion of his life, the New American—the type beyond, sprung from the moderns, the free and mighty

"If you do not do this thing to-night——"



women—it was this for which he had married her, the underflow of his great thought.

"No, it isn't so," he muttered; "a woman doesn't sacrifice herself so—merely for an idea—she never loves that way—it's beyond her!" He added, from his daze: "No—her love—that's first!"

"Do you, too, tell us that? Is that what women are? For love of him—that's your only idea, then?"

"You're the guardian of a man's honor, his home, his future, and you wreck it—for what? For an old passion—Rand!"

She turned wearily away: "I hoped you'd understand. He told me this, too—that I was not great enough—that none of us was great enough—but you—I thought *you'd* understand—you loved me—believed in us! Is this all we are, Corbett? Greedy creatures who cling passionately to man's love—and only that? Who offer our bodies, lives, souls, for nothing but that? O, I could go back again—a girl of the mills—the fields—a peasant with wooden shoes and bent back in the fields—for him now! He took my brother, ignorant, friendless, bloody, a hunted criminal, he took him, called him brother. . . . Corbett, did you?"

"I was thinking of my work, Demetra, and you—all I could do for you."

"A man does not need to do anything for a woman except to keep himself a hero in her eyes—that places him beyond all laws and creeds for her. Then she can go be an outcast and ask nothing."

"And then she loves," he retorted, and laughed, shrilly, bitterly: "What a joke it is! How it all comes back—he, the man who fired a passion in you —he comes back and the old flame leaps up, idealizing him, defying your soul for him, asking me to sacrifice myself for him! You told me once of some man in your child life—I did not question—I forgave. But you—you never forgot!"

"Corbett," she answered quietly, "are you great enough to believe me?" He stopped his outburst, the tone drove him illimitable leagues from her. "If I tell you truth, are you great enough to believe?"

"You confessed you loved him?"

"I do not love him."

"But you did—and you never forgot him!"

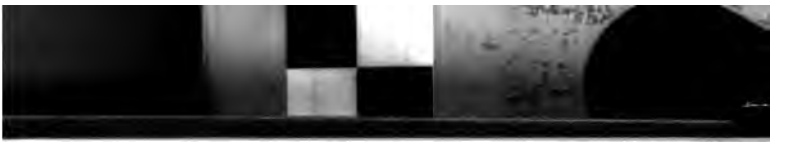
"Will a woman ever forget what's denied her?"

"Denied her?" he was stupid before her purpose: "See here, what was this man to you?"

"Nothing!" she retorted. "Are you big enough to believe?"

"What was he to you?" the husband whispered, staring.

"What he is to-day—the fool, the jester. He took me off the streets—a little animal, starved, homeless —a child with some peasant singers, who was pretty and had a voice. He bought me from old Jurak, the master—he sent me to school eight years—the years of his downfall, his years that I never knew of until long after—rich, luxurious, learning new ways



of life, giving me everything a girl could want—except—" She broke off and faced him. "Well, do you believe me?"

"Go on," he muttered.

"Ah, well, in the end, it seemed, I ruined him. I never knew his other life—but they called him a renegade preacher. And then, one night Rand came to me penniless. He tore the pearls he had given me from my throat to sell for the hospital bills of some man he'd picked up—and left me. . . . I never saw him until last Sunday—Easter Day!"

"Go on," he repeated, his eyes following hers.

"Well, you know the rest. I came to America after my voice failed. Then—Washington—and I met you . . . you brought me here to the home of your benefactor—the father of the man to whom I owed more than life. And I did not speak—how *could* I speak? They said for years that Rand was dead!"

Corbett's gaunt eyes glittered: "And he loved you."

"Love? That pagan who delighted in beauty—and let it grow?"

"What do you mean, Demetra?"

"He kept me as he found me—a child, always. What he meant for me you might as well ask the wind. This only I know—he gave me my chance. What I'd been but for him—" She drew her shoulders out and faced him calmly: "Look at me! Would I have been a wife—mother?"

His eyes were hopeless in their battling to find hope in hers: "And you never forgot. Yes, a woman could not forget nor forgive the man who denied her—who laughed as he does to-day!" And then he tortured himself with this recurrence: "To save him—you love him!"

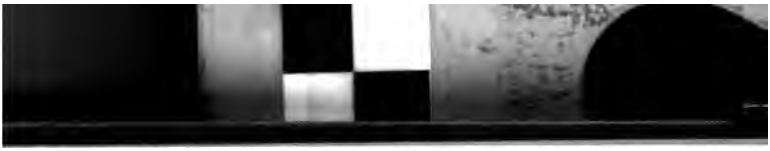
"No—to be myself. O, is not that plain?—plain?" She had come to him again, pleading, kneeling, now, by his chair. "Corbett, you'll do this! Yes, to show him we do not fear!"

He took her face between his hands and looked down to it; he had become so still again that she might have read the answer:

"There have been times when I was quite mad about you," he began gently. "There was something in you beyond me—all the fascination of a mystery was in you. There was the temple I could not enter. Yes, a dream hung in your soul—always of him—that no man could be what he might be—the terrible thing about him, his heights and the depths to which he could descend, the music of his voice, his unflinching eyes, the incomprehensible godlike brutishness about him—he thought he saw in you his mate, a comrade, but you disappointed him . . . and now the thing's possessed you. O, my dear!" he muttered, "we see clearly now. The temple in you—you shrined him there!"

She moved; her tears were starting: "You will not see," she pleaded. "Suppose there was a way?"

He set her head a little farther back and looked



steadfastly at her: "To give everything up—to bring Rand to this house—his place—his father?"

"Once you dreamed of me," she whispered, clinging to him. "I was to be a forerunner of the new, wonderful women you'd imagined—a sort of tribune of the people with my heritage of the old world. In your fine boy's way I was to be something like that, and the mother of a son for you! O, I was to be great—and you came to find it wasn't in me! O, you dreamer! But now—suppose there was a way for us?"

"You mean to confess to this—to go down—failed—for you?"

"For a great love, Corbett!"

He sat stilled. It seemed the walled room fell from them to vistas of the land, its endlessness with myriad destinies that in some mystic way were interwoven with his own. He saw himself going from it all as from a vast arena, humbled, broken, to a murmur of sad voices—a leader fallen—the pathos of silence when he had gone. He felt her arms about him, now, drawing his head to her own; the great sweetness of her breath—she held him with her passion breaking full, a torrent now filling all the courses of his lonely life, its inner need of women, their strength of love, their noble judgments . . . and then, as if stung by some dart from her embrace, he raised her white arms and put her by and rose.

"Corbett," she whispered, "love me—love me!"

"Here's my life," he answered slowly, "my work. It's not mine to sacrifice to save any man—it belongs there—" he pointed from the windows to the city's dark— "here—there—everywhere that it can bring hope—even a word. The children in Rand's mills, the children in the Pennsylvania mines, the child workers in the glass factories—everywhere, in all the land. The fight's big—they look to me—all the great hearts that hope to lift the burden—they look to me for leadership. And beyond, all the ages—the cleaner lives—the happier souls—the better way for the race fighting up—always up from the brute. I feel like one inspired with it . . . do you think I'd give it up to save this man?"

"For me," she said, and looked at him, his calmness and his strength with sudden terror. "Corbett!"

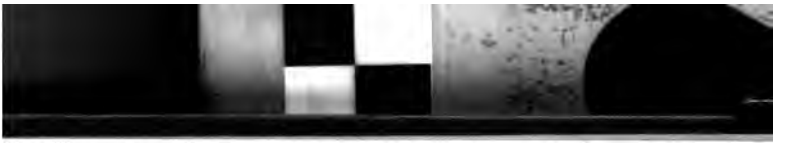
"No, not for you."

"He took your place, Corbett—your burden!"

"Let him. What's his life worth? There are things beyond any man's life—beyond—*beyond!* Let him accept—I accept!"

"You'd let me go," she whispered, and then, mechanically, she beat her clenched hands one on the other, dazed with his quietness, his power, her failure with him: "I pleaded with you—I asked you with all my love—and you could save it. Good God! You're sending me away, Corbett—your child with me!"

And he did not move, merely looked at her; while the little crystal clock struck three.



CHAPTER XX

THE next afternoon at three o'clock Demetra met John Bride as he was passing from the brick steps between the gates of painted iron along the street. The old Scot greeted her with his wonted cheer.

"Well, well," he went on slowly, "a fairish day —a bit frost coming. Nelse says there'll be snow up the Lake diveesion, late as it is."

But she saw Brother John's mind was not on his usual comforting affairs of the "Grand property housin' forty families." He had, indeed, come from Stephen sore with hurt. The judge had sat apathetically through John's hale attempt at cheer, hardly speaking, sunk, his chin on his shirt bosom with an uncertain waver. They had had their whisky and water, John stirring with a tinkle and a quip before the silent host, then he had come away.

"A fairish day," he went on, after the greeting, "but bringin' cold. I think I'll be at my walk—six miles in it will hearten a man."

Demetra looked at the sleek skin of John's face, the stout hand over the silver cane head. He had the stuff about him that goes well with tugging

winds and north distances. "John Bride," she said, "it seems that you've been the one thing that brought a breath of life to this house—the one man always welcomed."

She had never spoken so to him; she had been the beautiful and indifferent alien giving him a bit of ill-ease. Now he fumbled his stick in surprise, his eyes blinking. "Mrs. Ennisley," he answered, "a mon needs only carry his honesty before him—well or ill, he canna fear wi' that."

"There're some dare not," she muttered, and he looked alertly.

"Ye may well say—it was indeed a strange thing the other night." And at this, as one who had waited for her chance, she turned swiftly on him: "It was not honest! It was not honest—and you know!"

He lifted his shoulders shrewdly: "There's this and that to consider. A weakling mill-boy—a puir dragged creature of Rand's shanties—and then this son o' the house who boasts that he despises all human service—a defyin' speerit—a bucaneer of civilizeetion—wha'd he care for the children o' the mills? Is that a likely union—this brotherhood? I think the devil's in it!"

"Yes," she said, "he's at your house. You'll take me there to confront him."

He started: "Eh—you? He has a sneer for women! There's that Jew girl patient wi' him—but he lashes even her."

"Come," the wife retorted—"and now. I'll not have another night go by!"

He went along at her dominant urging, but hesitant: "What is it ye'd have? Ye can do naught—the girl's carin' for him and his wounds."

He saw her dark eyes dilate: "What more?" she cried and touched his sleeve. "Tell me, John Bride!"

"I know this," he answered, "Rand and the anarchist are hidden in her rooms—and the police are watching the place. Yes. How, I canna say, but the baker's boy first called me to it—he knew the detective they had across. And I speered a bit into it—someway, the neighbors must have noticed two strange men and wounded hidden there. But they're watched and it's bad. I told them a', and Rand would go wi' the boy—and Louise wouldna have it—she clung to them."

"To him?" The wife's grasp tightened; he was amazed.

"Eh?—She will not chance them in the street—no, not if she was taken wi' them. Eh?—it would be hard to explain! But women—God save the fools! When they love they'll love the hand that beats them!"

"Do you believe," she whispered, staring at him, "she loves him? No, it's unthinkable!"

He studied her craftily: "Nothing about ye is impossible, I take it. Eh?—the braggart, the blusterer! Why did she take him in—why offer a'most her life—her good name—to save him?"

"Come," the other woman retorted, "let us go."

"To them? Ye'd best not."

"I've heard strange things of you, John," she answered; "that on a dirty railroad crossing you spent eight hours a day waving a red flag because you wanted to be in service—to go out in service to the road you'd helped build. And men call you crazy—but let them. That is a great thing to you, John!"

"Ye canna know," he muttered. "Woman, I gave my young blood and bone to it—the road drivin' on always west wi' the people—now, I canna keep hand off it. It's grand to stand there lookin' along the rails and think of where it'll be leadin'—the lands and homes and cities, buildin' greater for a' time. Eh?—this America—can ye follow?"

"Well, then—take me," she retorted. "I, too, will show you something!"

They went along, John Bride bewildered, shaking his head, not looking at her, but conscious of her swing and freedom by his side, her eagerness and aggression, her resolves. And when they came to his red brick block among the dun warehouses and smoky environ of the road ten squares to the west among the frowsy, slinking foreign people of the quarter, he took her up without word, and before the clean paint and staining of the flat hallway, paused by a nickel door number.

"She keeps it close-locked," he said, "and the bell muffled. Did ye notice the mon on the grocery cor-

ner? We're thinkin' he's spyin' on the block to see who leaves and enters—that is my suspicion."

But to her hand the door opened, and they went directly along the passage to the little back dining-room with its proper tints and polishing of wood and new smells. There they surprised the three—Louise by the round table, paused, a coffee-pot in her hand; Rand by the window and Karasac beyond, sunk in a chair, dirty, ill-arrayed, sullen.

The girl had cried out. Old John interrupted: "Ye'r over careless wi' the door—there might be other guests."

Louise stared at them—at Demetra in a sort of fear—then hurried without a word down the hall. They heard her turn the latch; then she came back and was watching the new-comers, her breath sharp when she spoke.

"You here?" she said to the other woman—"for what?"

Her directness had unwelcome, menace. The wife felt Rand's covert glance; she put her hands on the back of the chair John drew up and leaning on it, faced them. The little room, its table in disarray, the bread scattered, a salad despoiled, had a rounding of fitness and content, even a brief, defiant gaiety. You would have thought that from the hostile world three refugees were making merry, and were little disposed to this unexpected coming.

"I've come for a matter that needs few words.

It's to you, Rand—you, alone. You shall go back—the thing is done."

His gray eyes, quiet, unlit, had a moment's gleam: "Your husband?" He sat forward with some easy interest. "You told him everything, then? Why, then, does he not come with your message?"

The wife evaded: "The thing's done," she muttered.

Louise spoke sharply: "You've not told him! Confessed that Karasac's your brother!"

"He knows, now." The wife turned from her. "And to-night the judge shall know. I've come to tell you, Rand—you shall go back."

He did not appear as one interested, but revolving some other matter.

"Your husband?" he said at length, for they appeared waiting on him—"I think I read him well enough. You told him—but he does not dare! You pleaded, I imagine, and he—eh? Ah, the pity of it!"

She could not endure his brooding, the measureless pity, indeed, in his deep voice. The girl had come nearer: "Mrs. Ennisley, surely you've not spoken! Surely you know what it means!"

The wife ignored her; she crossed with a simplicity that had a pathos greater than all words to touch the brother's hand. She spoke in Polish, a murmur, then a rising word—a cry. It was a beseeching—an appeal, a love. . . . Her hand, so—upon his—her other raised to brush back the matted hair from his brow. And to it all he muttered, he shook his

head, then, with a snarl, leaped back from the chair and cursed her in their common tongue. She stood pale before them, a timid tenderness unthinkable in her, reaching again to him—the splendid woman and the black-browed mill-hand in his dirt and hostile suspicion.

"Ludovic," she whispered, and he whipped out an oath to her. "Brother," she murmured, and he bared his teeth and grinned in hate.

The thing was on them big. They could not have endured more. Old John put forward: "Leave be, man!" he said dully. "None o' that now. The woman's askin' o' ye!"

Louise reached to Rand across the table—the wife saw her hand touch his, draw it with a pressure—she checked her hurt; she stood silent in her abnegation, looking again at Karasac by the wall holding his bandaged elbow, in the unreasoning anger of the brute. Always his little black eyes roved from Rand to her and back.

"I came," the wife said, "to take him somehow—to acknowledge him. Yes," she added, and turned again to Rand. Beneath the sense of insult she was calm. "To-night, the judge shall know. We can do this thing—yes, I, alone—then go. As God lives, I can do this!"

"For what?" Rand said. "You will spoil a marvelous fancy of mine."

Demetra had turned to John Bride: "This is what you could not see—my brother, here. And the

other night I *knew*—yes, and I dared not speak when Rand took the blame on him. You see, John Bride? This Karasac is my brother."

In his uncomprehending it seemed a great light flashed. He did not cry out nor question, but merely, his old head shaking, muttered: "Puir bodies! I felt the hauntin' on them all!" And then, as if he did not care to see the woman's soul bared further, old John stole softly to his rooms across the hall.

Back in the little room they listened further to her. Louise once put in: "You should not have come here. The house is watched for some reason. Well, to-night they must be moved—must get away, somehow."

"He's mine," the wife said clearly. "My brother, here—mine to protect."

"You can't," the girl retorted; "there's more to think of than a piece of foolishness. They're hunted —both of them—and they've got to get away."

Rand's ceaseless eyes were on them, one to the other. His rare smile came—it had a trace of sleepy malice. "To paint the lily, and to gild pure gold," he put in. "Eh?—what has come out of the old death's head of a house? What miracles? Tell me! You will, Demetra, for some idea wholly beyond you, wreck yourself, the professor, and all he's at, to save me—I who take my catgut soul and fiddle on it while I watch the rest of you burning? I will confess to you an extraordinary thing . . . I do not believe I'm worth it!"

The wife watched him steadily: "No. But there is this greater than you. To prove myself—to go simply to what needs be. I can accept."

He looked at her with his dissembling surprise. "I," he went on sententiously, "would like to see it. Demetra—with something of the magnificent barbarian about you—that you should be so aroused! Good heavens, it would be worth a score of common years—to see you rise and tell the justice that I, his son, am a person much maligned; that I am, indeed, a hero with something of the proportions of a demigod! It would be worth the hearing."

She turned from them to the door: "No matter —you shall come."

Louise came between them. "You'll not," she answered sharply. "Don't you see what it would mean? All Doctor Ennisley's built in a lifetime—the thing he's fought for. I think he can be the first to point to the dawn of a new day. He will make socialism a thing appealing to men's imaginations. He has it in him, and he's coming on so fast, so far. No, you shan't wreck it with this—this anarchist—this brother!"

"Louise, once you loved him," the wife cried, "and it's dead, now! O, you can talk of your socialism and greater things, but a woman can't mind that! This thing's crushed him, and you've had your dream killed—the thing in him you loved!"

"Be still, there's no use in this," the other whispered.

"But I'll not be still. He shall go on and be grea
O, yes—there's a way for him, too! Do you thin
he could go all his life long under this? Rand ser
away, an outcast, laughing—and Corbett knew
Good God! can any man be great for the work o
the world and have that on his soul?" And then sh
whipped about on him: "Here's Rand—he shall nc
go!"

"Rand?" the girl said slowly. "Let him gc
What's a single life worth against the others?"

He nodded, but with no trace of feeling: "A
addled knight, fighting windmills. Consider me s
if you wish—and if it will cause your voices t
lower! Old John's tenants may have Scotch ears."

"You shall not drag the doctor into it," the gir
said hotly. "There's more than he or Rand, I tel
you. What's one man's soul?"

"There's mine," the other woman answered
"One must see to one's own."

Rand had risen; he bowed gravely: "One's sou
is altogether one's own property. I, indeed, have
wrangled that my life long and found none to agree
in practice. Women, at least, are bound to be hitch
ing some baggage to it; or—as it were—making o
the thing a duet. One ought to be free to draw from
it what one will; a strain to mingle with the seraphic
choir, or, as I prefer at times—to make mine catgu
on which to fiddle the lively ditties of the day. God'
sun is warm. I sit in it and caterwaul as long as He
will let it shine. . . . It's not my affair to meddl

with—to inquire why He is He, and I am I—but yet I can sit here and discuss it with lively interest. Here we are—the three of us—and at a most extraordinary moment of living. I feel about me exquisite and hidden essences of mind—soul. I am positively acute with it. It is rare, indeed, to come upon a matter such as this."

The women looked upon him; the face of one had colored—the other was as steel. And the last went on: "Yes, it's like you now, to pause and divert yourself—to pick fine words and make a bit of fooling of it all. O, very like you!"

"One of the distressing things is the mere fragmentary catching at things with which we have to be content," he answered. "Even I can not quite attain the necessary impersonality. My vanity is for ever rendering me disastrously human. I lose much through the weaknesses common to you all."

"Be still!" she cried. "I've only asked you this—that you shall come to-night and find whether I have dared or not! You shall not go life long thinking this—you shall hear me!"

He appeared distantly amused. "I shall be there."

Louise was quick upon him: "No," she said, "you can't. You know how matters are here—the house watched—and then she must not tell this thing to your father—no, at any cost—no!"

"My father? Did you think I feared him? I could stand before the devil, and, if my digestion was well, out-talk him."

The older woman went from the room and along the passage. They heard her snap the lock and go out. The mill-hand looked after her in his suspicion, his helplessness ever to Rand's moods. Louise came hotly to Rand. "She's mad with it all—see what you've done!"

"It is excellently done. I believe I shall yet awake the soul in her."

"Ah, you!" the girl cried out, and turned away. "You're not human . . . and yet half an hour ago, it seemed I had some desperate hope in you—you had a gentleness—a humor—O, what's in you?"

"You had a hope?" he asked leisurely. "Of what?"

She looked at him confused. Her eyes had not their clear and fixing steadiness of yesterday: "You are the falsest, the most ridiculous person I ever knew!"

"Yet," he answered gravely, "you'd sell ten years of life to prove to yourself that I was not."

She went on in her feeling: "See what you've done—you've goaded her to confession. The doctor—his place. I tell you," she added resolutely, "you must save him yet. I tell you, you must—you must find a way."

The anarchist had gone out; they heard him in the farther sleeping-room, groping about among the furnishings. Rand slowly took the girl's hands across the table, drew her near, studied her.

"There's in you," he began, "the thing that's

driven men to the block. You could walk out and lay down your own head for that which you loved."

"Yes," she answered, "what's greater—tell me?"

"The man," he remarked airily, "is not worth your while. Eh?—there's the wife who can hold him by a hair."

"I was not thinking of him," she muttered. "No—not now. And you've played on her—driven her to what she thinks is a great sacrifice. You, who've jeered at women—there's one woman's answer."

He smiled with his ironic assurance: "And for what—tell me? Eh?—Disinterestedly, I should say she loves me."

The girl drew from him: "And you can speak of that! So! Calmly—as if it were a play you're watching! Loved you?—suppose she did?"

"Her soul," he answered, from his thought. "I still will polish the thing—Eh?—I'd rub it, as one would a flawless gem, clean and complete its beauty—and then, on a bit of velvet—with a bow—hand it back to her and assure her: 'Madam, it is very good, indeed! But my taste runs to simpler effects!' "

"And you?" Louise murmured. "And then—ah, you!"

"I," he answered, with some circumspection, "would then go on to the next study one might find of interest."

She sat back and could not look at him for a moment. "Well, then," she said, after her abstraction, "if that's the way you look at things, here's the

man's honor—his career—beyond, a matchle chance to find this jewel of good deed you're alwa seeking, it seems, as a collector does his gems. (you could save him for his work—his life's pu poses!"

"Granted. And if I could induce you women t keep your hands off and cease tinkering with yo sentimentalisms, I'd accomplish it."

She turned on him intently. His round face wa unmoved—her blue eyes searched him long. ' don't love him," she muttered, at last. "You shoul know that now!"

"Obviously. I've broken the thing. But here am about to complete my ruin for what you hol beyond anything in your life—to protect your fa atic's dream of the social regeneration—which have not a deal of faith in, sure as it is to come. say that I, Rand, am about to take off my hat, bo gravely, and mount the scaffold for you and you visions . . . in return therefor, my dear youn woman, you will love me."

She rose from him, looking down, unflinching He shrugged his shoulders and went on with som patience: "That is the distressing thing abou women. You confuse all our heroisms with some thing of the sort."

For a time she had no answer; then, from th other door, she turned, her eyes unfearingly on him "I'll not," she said clearly—"I shall not love you— never . . . never!"

He rubbed his chin with some concern: "Possibly not. You have the merest chance of escape by the law of averages. But wait—let us round the thing—let us make it a brilliant to flash in the sun. Eh?—it will be of amazing interest! Let us see to it purely with the eye of the master-craftsman . . . we may, indeed, find a marvel surpassing all."

She did not try to answer. He got up and looking at the clock, assured her good night with his usual gravity; then went to the room in the rear. She did not move for a time—her eyes were intent on the court window through which she saw him moving to lay about the other sleeping man the blanket from his own bed. The spring air was cold.

CHAPTER XXI

THE wife went back through the wet spring night, the press of a tepid and fitful wind from off the lake upon her cheek, heralding more of the showers that had made the week uncertain with its intermittent sunshine and its cool north breath. When she reached the rooms she threw open the windows so that the damp puffing came in. Corbett was not in his study; she remembered having seen a light in the library—at times he studied there. She put off her street things and went to the main portion of the house, and when she reached the door from the hall, she heard voices in the library. She saw beyond, Corbett sitting, his arm about his mother, and her thin fingers on his brow. She was murmuring in her shy restraint of love, and they did not stir when the wife came. Only the old mother looked up inquiringly, almost unfriendly at first, to the intrusion. Corbett was looking away, the profile of his beard, full nose and white brow high, clear-cut. Demetra had ever a detached admiration for the daintiness about him, oddly variant with his studies, his fighting life, his rude upbringing, his hot ardors—his clean, trim aspect had al-

ways satisfied the esthete's sense in her, if nothing more. And when he turned and saw her, she was conscious of this same detached liking of his clean personality, his charm of manner.

But his eyes winced at sight of her, the well-loved, the beautiful always to him; the full figure in its dark close-fitting serge, the laced neck, making a delicate net colored with the flesh beneath—it rushed to him as a hot tide that he loved her splendidly, his ardent life with ever its underrunning note of lonely pathos, the need of strength behind him.

"Dear—" he said, and stopped. His mother's arm slipped from him; the old lady got up with the air of a school-girl caught at love-making.

"I been sparkin' with your boy," she said.

The wife smiled faintly. "I've been looking for him," she went on. And then, as if the fullness of it would not be denied: "Corbett, I've sent word to Judge Rand that he meet us here. . . . I'm glad you're already on the spot."

He looked hopelessly at her. "You're still determined," he muttered, and then looked at his mother. "Demetra, can't you wait? This is no time to discuss it."

"There's no need for pretense." She crossed and threw open the tall unwieldy shutters, and heard him whisper: "Incredible—madness!"

"Nothing more sure—more sane. I've asked him here—and Rand will come at nine . . . and you shall tell them, Corbett!"

He would not answer to her incision. The old woman looked about perplexed. "What now? The judge's wild limb of a son—has he been arrested with that boy yit?"

They each turned to her. "Corbett," the wife said composedly, "now tell her—tell them all the truth!"

And he went down the long room to the windows where she stood, her clear voice ringing, and left the mother by the table, groping blindly among their directnesses.

"I asked you once before," Demetra went on, "to speak."

"And I told you I'd not. I'm guilty of no wrong to any man. And if this thing's come on me—that a mill-boy whom I raised a bit from the brutish child he was, is your brother—if he came flying back to me in his hate and fear, that's no fault of mine."

"Another man took your place—we were not great enough to go his way. No—no!"

"You love him," the husband answered listlessly, "I can see it in you, always now." Then his voice broke: "A sort of madness in you!"

"I was never so calm—so clear. O, it seems I never before was awake! I slept as he told me—a cat by a fire and all about me was the fight and struggle. There were my people. It seems I must have fattened on them here with you."

"You feel this?" he muttered. "What's come to you? Great God, if you'd felt that at the *first*—

what I imagined I saw in you!" Then he went on in a swift appeal: "Demetra, this boy—there'll be a way found to protect him without our confessing. I'm in a position where a pebble's weight against me would topple the whole thing I've built—all I've done with my life."

"Let it tumble," she retorted, "if it's built on lies."

He stared at her calm face, he reached to touch her arm; his voice came low and hard: "Mine's a man's work, and who can take my place? The good that I can do? And you'd ask me to throw it over for a woman's whim."

"A woman's whim?" Her voice was curiously intent: "Go on—I want to hear you out," she added.

"Yes, an insane idea of chivalry, I call it. To sacrifice everything for the sake of one—and that one, *Rand!* If you knew all—if you could realize where I stand—that they say I'm the man whose influence is arousing the lethargy of the universities—that here I'm teaching to the young manhood of the state the juster social relations—the dawn of the new day."

"The new day?" she repeated: "Well, for me it's here!"

"You're mad," he muttered, "you can't mean it!"

"Yes," she drew from him, "I shall go."

He looked at her and did not flinch. "Well then, if you think I fear, let me tell you what I can give

up. I love you—you know I love you—the dearest thing in all my life—but I'll give you up for the greater thing beyond. Yes, I'll have you think me a coward, and I'll be patient with it all my life. . . . I can do that, and you can go."

She stepped farther back; she seemed in wonder at this fanaticism beyond their pettiness of fortunes. And then she muttered: "Corbett, you're suffering so!"

"No matter. I've come up fighting—I'll go down fighting. You can ruin me, but some way I'll fight back—I'll clear myself."

"But you love me, Corbett!"

And to her cry, he answered: "God knows that. I placed you higher than anything in my life, except a man's work . . . that's beyond us all."

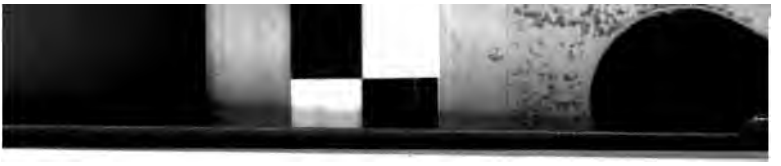
"Well," she said patiently, "I'll go to-night."

"To-night?" His hopeless tone returned, his eye's resolution sank. "There's no need—to-night."

"I'll not spend it beneath this roof, or with you. And in late summer my child shall come. Corbett, I'll let you know of it."

He cried out sharply, groping his way back to his mother, who had risen, bewildered, grasping here and there a meaning, giving now and then an inarticulation of amazement.

And when he had reached her they saw in the hall door the master of the house. The light was on his white thin hair, the Roman face, smooth, gray, the plum-colored jacket and white waistcoat. He



looked in apathetically. "My dear," he asked of Demetra, "what's this?"

She paused. Corbett, beyond her, faced him calmly: "My wife is leaving me."

The old man did not comprehend; only the mother murmured, staring.

"Eh?" the justice said: "It's a bad night out, Mrs. Ennisley." He fingered his watch fob listlessly. "You'd best have the carriage ordered if you're going out."

And on their stillness, he turned, his old eyes dulling: "Doctor, I am not well. This has been strange —my son home—then back to the darkness from whence he came."

"He's gone beyond us all to the new day."

The father turned to Demetra curiously. "Eh?—a day?"

"He has found," she said, "the brotherhood."

Stephen raised his hand: "You puzzle me—you speak riddles."

"No, it's very clear—as all great things are simple."

The old man nodded to her, his tired eyes closing: "Strange—strange."

The wife went swiftly to Corbett. "Speak," she whispered, "you can save me!"

But he did nothing except to say resolutely: "Sir, my wife is leaving me."

Clinging to his arm the old woman fluttered in apprehension. The justice turned a face resigned with

the querulous half-patience of the aged: "Leav —this house?" He turned now to her: "M Ennisley?"

"Yes," she said, and the tone troubled him; leaned heavily on the chair back and nodded: "W no—my friends. Impossible!" He peered curiou at them. "You mean to say you're parting?"

The wife came before him: "I asked you he I would like to have had you in your robes. O wanted it great enough for that—I wanted to proud—" she turned to Corbett; he saw her agony "Ah, well—there's nothing now to say! He *failed*

The justice stood doubting: "Why, Doctor," began, "you love her!"

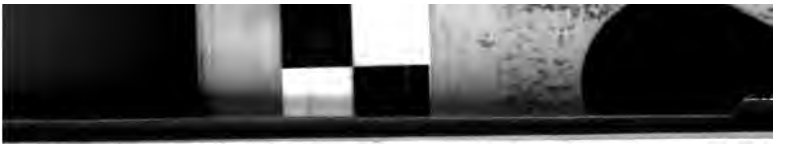
"Yes—yes."

And to his exclamation the wife brought her cr "You love me, and you'll give me up! That's t horror of it—but *men* can do it!"

"But my dear," the judge went on, more evenl "we need you. I—Brother John—you've seemed brighten this old place a bit. And your husband- his work . . . you must help him. I'm leavii much to him."

"He's the stronger now," she answered, ar turned again to the old man and put her hand upc his sleeve: "Your son is coming," she said clearl "at nine—it is very near now. Let's wait—I much rather he were here for every word of it."

And Corbett hardly stifled his cry. The fath trying to straighten his bent form to its old dimin



tive but notable dignity, went on with his expostulations: "My son back? What can you mean? And you leaving? What can it be?"

"Wait," the wife said calmly. "Rand will be here. Be seated." And the father hobbled back to his great chair, sat shaking his head at them; by the door the wife stood, tall, silent, listening in a sort of stealth. They waited for him—always this house was waiting for him to come and jeer, to break and mock—to solve the thing.

The judge began his bewildered muttering presently, and then Demetra stole forward with a warning. She listened, flew to the door; they heard her exclamation in the hall; and Rand had come in while she closed it—was before them shaking a sparkle of rain from his big shoulders, crushing back his gray hat to look about. The wife followed.

"He's here," she said, in a sort of authority.

The old man rose, seeming to harden himself to answer: "Three nights ago I sent you from this house."

"And I've come back. You might have expected I'd come back if the fancy took me."

"I sent for him," the wife put in—"he knows—Corbett knows. Now you shall all know. Rand's here—that much is due him."

"Due me? All life is due me, but who gets a tenth the world owes him. It's a thief, a rascally trader that sneaks and bargains. It owes us joy, sunlight, peace—and we're cowardly beggars who

dare not take by force. I've wondered that men should stand so pitifully dumb and be denied—that they should mumble prayers and mind laws—eh? For what?—to let the fruit go unsucked just out of their bruised fingers. That's another marvel that I see!"

"My son," the old man muttered; and the wife hastened: "Be still—I did not bring you here to preach to us. Judge Rand, you called him 'son' just now . . . he shall be that again." She looked back at Corbett, calm, his arms folded, the mother by him. "I've given up all."

"She's leaving this house," the husband added coolly.

"Alone?" Rand asked, regarding him.

"Alone," the other retorted.

"You'd not speak—not even for your love of her?"

"Not for the love of any woman. Rand, you know well enough. Here she could stay—I'd protect her—I'd find a way to save her good name—yes, I'd fight for her all my life long, but I'd not give up my work for her—the higher truth—the greater love! O, man, is it beyond you to understand me?"

The other man was curiously stilled.

"And let you go," the wife put in, "the outcast!"

"He's boasted that was his great way—his brotherhood of the road. Well, that's his way, but here's mine."

"You've done this?" Rand muttered, still absorbed: "Man, she's free of you!"

"She can go," Corbett retorted quickly, "the way is open."

"I can go," the wife began, her calm breaking here and there in her voice: "I can take him—escape somehow—somewhere. It will not matter. Back to our people, if need be—the mills, the tenements—the dirty shops—anywhere, to be myself—and true!" They stirred before her—she went on: "You told me that I—that women were not strong enough—great enough—that I—Demetra—was only a woman—a creature moved by passion for one or the other of you—no more . . . that I could give nothing except that. Ah, well!" She crossed before them to the old man's chair—"Here, now," she cried—"I speak!"

The old man struggled up amazed, and she took his hand and drew him out a step.

"He shall judge me—he shall say if I've been less than either of you!" And then, to the old man's quavering, she went on dispassionately: "You've been kind to me—your home, my home—your protection and your friendship—well, we've built our lives on it. But I'm not what you thought. Judge Rand, a girl of your mills South! A sister to that man who came here—Karasac, the anarchist."

He muttered the name and was puzzled still: "The mill-boy," she continued, "my brother, and we knew—we knew, and did not speak. And Rand

took the thing on him—he lied . . . to save us, he lied!"

"Karasac—your brother?" The old man's doubtful note arose. He faced the men: "The mill-boy? He came to find her? Sir, will you tell me truth?" His eyes were on his son; but the woman spoke before them: "He knew nothing—he never saw this boy until last Monday. And Karasac fled here to find protection from us—*us*—do you see that! A boy of the mills whom Corbett taught—his friend—my brother—don't you see that!" she cried again, her passion rising.

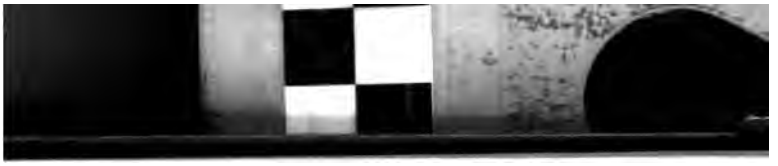
"You brought me here," the judge began, "to listen to this astounding story!"

"And we'll go," the woman said, "people of the mills where you breed hate and fear. My brother—see what America made of him—a rat—a thing despising me. That's what the mills do . . . he was a child there!"

"The mills," the old man murmured. "They trouble me." His head shook wearily; then turned: "Doctor, you've done this?"

"The thing's true. The mill-boy was my pupil—I tried to raise him. Well, I can go, too." He turned from them to the window. "There's a man's work somewhere, even yet!"

"Go?" The justice's cracked voice arose: "Doctor, you can't go. I've been strangely moved of late. That boy's face the other night—a child raised in my mills—its hate, its fear, its infamy. In the



shadows of my house I saw it—it seems to haunt me." He moved down the room; he tottered a little, and went on: "Eh, Doctor? You can't leave me—there's much to do. To-day I signed away two hundred thousand for the training school down there. Man, was not that what you were after?"

Corbett turned—his eyes a trifle wild. The old man muttered on: "Some light—a little kindlier—perhaps more just . . . that boy's brute face—a child raised in Rand's mills."

"You mean—" Corbett quivered with it— "my work's going on?"

"Who else?" the justice answered wearily. "Man, you can not leave it."

The wife had stirred: she came near them and spoke confusedly: "You forgive all?" she said, and repeated it: "Forgive—forgive?" And then she cried: "The mills where you crushed us! Stanislaus—Joseph—little Marta! And Ludovic, living—see what they made of him! An anarchist—hunted, now—no place for him in all America! No friend—nothing!"

"The boy?" the justice added mildly, seeming dazed again, "Let him be treated kindly. Perhaps there's much to say—a boy raised in the mills."

"He can't," Corbett retorted. "The police—they'd dog him to the earth—they'd hang him . . . five of them were killed."

"True—true—" the judge was thoughtful. "The law—he'd have to face it."

"What justice could there be for him?" the
cried— "for us—now, it's done—what justice?"

The judge gently raised his hand. "It's a p
lem. The law can not consider every phase of
He sighed: "If there was a way. Here's the
tor's work—here's the good name of this hou
if there was a way—"

Rand grimaced: "I was waiting for that—
reputations, eh? Yes, you'd look first to your
names if the race rotted for it."

The wife's face set hard. "Well, at least I
not feared. I can go!"

"She can't see," the husband said, "how a
might love her and refuse her. We may as we
know, Judge. Here's the man who first awok
her a child's passion. An actor, genius, fo
whatever he is to stab the world with his ton
And I—I'm a man of home and child and worl
offered that, but she'd rather go."

"She can not go," the justice muttered, "it's r
ness!" He went to her: "Madam, your plac
here by his side."

"My brother," she retorted, and was still.

They looked at Rand. He rubbed his finger-
his grimace came.

"The beast-brother," he said, "is mine. I w
be for ever consumed with curiosity if I gave hin
Eh? The soul of the beast? One might find
time!"

"My son," the old man muttered, "the affai

pears to be on you. We've stood within your power —now it seems we turn to you in the dark."

The outcast twirled his fingers with the air of a diagnostician to whom is propounded a query unworthy of his powers. "Nothing easier. I have lectured you more than enough—you've been diligent pupils. Go about your affairs—be as human as you can—I will not expect too much of you. And I will be off with the brother—there is no chance for him here, that's sure."

"You'll leave," the wife cried. "Good God, have you no common feeling?"

"I? I am exasperatingly sentimental. I am for ever immersed in human feeling from every one about me. Eh?—if I could ever attain the purely scientific attitude! But I'm too much a poet of the senses—I've too much a heart open to the world—I am far too religious. . . . I dig for truth unfearingly, and then, when I find it, I must carry it to God with some hullaballoo, even though we both disdain adoration and the bumping of heads on the ground. Eh?—you, Doctor! You men of books and naturalistic laws—when the new order comes, and you have considered all things; when the last wilderness is plowed up, and the last sea explored —when the last beast is shot, and the last savage tamed and in a collar and cravat—when the whole round earth is gardened out, and all the mills are built and administered with the due humanitarian philosophy—when, in short, the final analysis is

made and the complete code set forth, and the last adventure done, when the road lies white and smooth and broad before us, and life goes on—on—always on—upon my soul, what then?"

"Rand, the day will come."

"Doubtless—this socialism. It will be the last epic." He shrugged and turned away. "I have enough to do to live my own. You will notice that even in this matter of the little beast-brother, I was not allowed to complete it—God knows, my jewel of good deed seems now a cracked bit of slate. I was going off alone with the boy to discover what was in him."

"My son," the justice muttered, "out of your incredible life, one thing seems sure. You would save us all. I wonder what is in you?"

"A preacher; what would you have me?"

A flick of a grim smile touched the father's face. "You're going? Have you money?"

"As much as eighty cents, and I owe that to John Bride. Eh, give me money! Give me enough and I could lift the shadow off the world! I could make all the fields green, and have all the children laughing. It's the magician—it can take a starved body and in it breed a soul!"

They looked at him in their old despair. In the pause a sound came, and John Bride thrust his red face through the open door. It lit at sight of Rand.

"Man, ye've been long. There's need of ye.

The girl's left—she and the brother. The police were on them."

"Louise? She's left the house!"

"The baker down the block warned us. I canna tell all." He looked about: "Come, lad—again, it's on ye!"

Rand had turned. The wife came swiftly near. "It's dark—it's raining—wait—think!"

"There's none to act save Rand," old John retorted. "There'd be danger to the rest. It's bad enough—Louise hunted down. Come, lad!"

Rand's eyes were already on the outer dark.

The father moved toward the hall. "A moment—you'll need money. Doctor, will you order the carriage?"

John went with him to his rooms, the footfalls died, the rain splashed the panes, the shadows grew, and in this the wife and the outcast stood alone. From the tenseness and the talk, they now stood in silence across the room from each other. Rand did not speak; his thoughts, it seemed, upon the dark.

"My brother," she said at length, as if to her own heart. "I would have gone—I've given up all, but it seems this last is denied me." She came to him in a sort of timidness now. "O, it seems I've awakened. My brother! . . . I wanted to say—to have him know—to remember that I could not see before! Ah, will you have him think kindly of me?"

And because Rand did not at once answer, she went swiftly on. "O, I can envy you! To stand a

moment heroic with it all—even if it was mere madness . . . but I tried. Herford, I *tried*—did you see that?"

"What's come to you?" he answered, "you're changed, indeed."

"Have I proved myself?" she retorted. "See here—I'm not afraid. Herford, I can offer my hand to you. . . . I see so clearly now. I'm strong—and a strong man loves me—a brave man. He stood against me when he loved! I understand now what he was thinking of, his work—the dream he had of the new race. Rand, his child is to be born to me."

He looked at her wondering.

"And you," she said, "who made a jest of women—you stung my soul with it now as you did long ago—you came back here to whip me with my unworth. O, you're very wonderful! And the old way I loved you, Herford—it's quite dead. I'm strong, now—can't you see?"

But when the deep stealth of his voice came, she turned and would not look at him, she nervously evaded: "Go, now." And she kept at it, as he raised her hands. "Go, now—go—*go!*"

"You women," he muttered; "life beats you back—it withholds and mocks you—the pity of it! The ages have left this in the eyes of all of you—that you shall be merely patient and deny."

He laid away her hand and smiled. "Go back. The thing's well enough—complete. Eh?—it was well worth while—to see you stand, to hate, re-

nounce—unfearing! Indeed, you did not fail in the least, Demetra!"

She twisted nearer in some feeling. "And is that all?" she whispered. "Herford, see—I'm strong, now. Tell me . . . you might have loved me!"

And as he stood with his brooding smile, untouched, it seemed, John Bride's voice came from the hall, with Stephen's quaver beyond. The draw of the cool air filled the room. Rand went without; she saw him conferring with the old Scot, and then the glint of the polished wheels at the door. She followed, and by Stephen's side, heard the grit of the wet gravel, the sludge of wheels in the drive, the clacking of the hoofs on the crossing. And still they stood—the old man and the wife—peering after, listening to the blur of sound, the flick and whisper of the rain covering it; the air blowing on them, stirring the blue hall light, alive, disengaging spring. Then, leaving the father muttering, she hurried back and up the stairs and along the passage swiftly and alone.

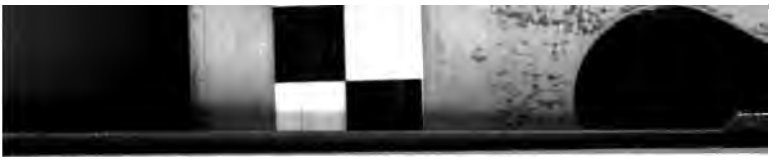
Corbett and his mother saw her; with a whisper, the man left the old woman. When he reached the living-room it was empty, dim-lit.

"Demetra!" he cried, and looked about. She came from the child's chamber beyond and stood watching him, her hand raised in warning. "Be still," she answered, "Tad's asleep."

"You've come to him and to me," he said. "Dear, what other way—what other way!"

"Yes," she whispered, "he sent me here, Cor
If I'm awakened, it was he!" And then, becaus
stood stilled and apart from her, she suddenly c
to him, her arms about his neck and kissed
"Always you were calling and I could not he
she whispered on, "I let you go alone!"

And as he had been alone, coming at his great
down to the sea of life, so now they sat and list
to the breathing child; and, it seemed, to the o
awed, in this spring night, at the ineffable achi
ment, Nature fecundating the immemorial c
life starting green, for ever at return along
highway.



CHAPTER XXII

BY one of those curious chances which lead one to credit, at times, the intervention of the unseen, they came upon the fugitives within the hour. The driver had been told to follow the Lake Shore Drive southward from the lower end of Lincoln Park; and the two men in the carriage had watched the roughened made land of the lean park. The place was lone; to the right the young wet trees and the twinkling lamps against the bulked far houses; to the left the dumped dirt heaps with the flash of white breakers now and then, beyond. John cracked a doubt.

"I was told they'd seek the shore and wait for us —that was her message." Then his old eyes peered. "Hist! Two figures beyond the turn, and one a woman—and they're comin'."

And from over the asphalt shore-work she came to them, the light from the clouds on her face, a black silk-netted scarf about her blacker hair, her eyes resolute. "I was sure of you when the carriage stopped," she said, "none other would come out here."

"Ye're wet, girl," John put in eagerly, "and the man—whaur is he?"

Rand had opened the door, but she waited until Karasac had come. The mill-man had no word beyond a mutter; he swung in and by John's side, with a glitter of eye from a distant lamp. "Beast-brother," murmured Rand, "you're giving us a deal of discomfort with saving this neck of yours. Well, now—John Bride—which way?"

"Ye've money?" John asked. "Stephen saw to that? Well, it's out of the city for ye both before daybreak. Let's think o' it."

The girl watched Rand intently. "And you're going?" she said, "after all, she confessed—and still you took him on you?"

"I did," he answered, "that's the last joke. I'm off with him, and a rough night and a wet skin ahead. Eh?—it was worth the price!"

To his old grimace she had a nervous gesture. "Well, now to find a way. We'll be followed. The railroad stations will be watched. Karasac is wounded—they must have his description—and you—you are a poor actor when it comes to disguising, I'm afraid. They probably spotted you coming to the flat—I think that caused the first comment. We did not slip from the house half an hour too soon to-night."

They watched her flicking the water from her sleeves, listening to her incisive voice. The carriage went slowly southward along the new-made land, the horses splashing the churned mud.

"West," Louise muttered in the dark, "if you'd

get a train at Winnetka, or somewhere up the north shore—any of the stations there. It seems the only safe chance. Down-town I'd fear for you—you, with your wild talk, and Karasac, ignorant, helpless, defiant."

"Beast-brother," murmured Rand, "she gives us an evil reputation."

She stirred—her hand touched his on the cushions—cold, wet, she did not withdraw it, as she went on: "O, you must drop this now! Be reasonable." Then she went on to John with her eager importuning.

"Ye fool," old John answered, "mind what she says! If ye were confronted down-town by officers what wad ye say?"

"I would make faces. My brother, here, would doubtless yelp of equality, fraternity—anarchy, justice, brotherhood—God knows the rest of it. He has an irrefutable philosophy, however—he would wind up: 'All dis—w'at?' "

She sat back in despair, and drew her hand away. His voice, cool, unmoved, melodious—he seemed enjoying the matter greatly.

"Drive on," old John called softly— "the river—take Rush Street and turn left to the docks. I have a way, it seems—a cracked scheme, but 'twill do."

"A lake boat?" she said, "it would not do for them to be seen leaving Rand's carriage at the docks—the monogram in the side—Terance known."

"That's not it. Old Nelse's nephew keeps small boats near by—launches and the like. Only last week

he asked me go fish. I can dicker wi' the man—he'll not ask nor give about it."

She caught the old man's arm. "A launch? That would put them up the lake shore for a midnight train! It's a chance."

"A bit chance—if the lad's by."

"Well, for it," muttered Rand, "believe me, I'd rather not be hanged, and as for prison, I've tasted it four times in my life—the fare's not to my taste."

"O, man—be done!" John Bride glowered. "You'd have gab before the Almighty, and to spare, I've no doubt. Be still—we're turning on the wharves—the light from that big steamer's fair on ye."

The carriage had come to a narrow pebbled cleft between tall warehouses and the black river. John Bride swung open the door; he was out and along the planked way where a single red light hung at a staging. Across the stream the lights of the lake steamer made the water a coiling, begilded snake. In this interval, encompassed by the wet dark, they sat stilled; the girl in some nameless despair; the mill-hand sullen, and Rand ceaselessly watching.

Old John came bobbing back from the shadows. "It's fair easy. Not a soul's about to see us, and the lad's got the boat swinging free, the engine workin'. He's just come in from up the north branch on some shippin' business. Come away—follow."

Rand took the girl's hand on the stairs to the landing. As in a dream she let him seat her on

the cushioned seat forward; as in a dream she felt the bobbing launch, the grate on the dock piles; heard the murmur of voices aft, old John's in some reproof, and Rand's melody, a sonorous jest and quarrel. The boatman held a lantern down, as Rand crouched by the tiny engine amidships. "I can run it," he retorted, "I've handled them."

"The girl?" John still insisted from above, "Louise—ye canna take her!"

"I'll not leave them," she answered, "until I see them on a train—away—free of the city."

"It's grand," John muttered, "and I'll go home. There'll be much to explain—to gloss about and lie over. I'll go see Stephen wi' the word of you." And then his shout of warning about the breakwater and the wind outside came faintly, for the eighteen-foot power boat was turning in the snaky water, and had fled, stealthy as a ferret, after one sobbing exhaust, down the dirty stream. They saw the last light flicker by the warehouse end—the Polack crouched in the stern, Rand forward of the engine, his hand on the tiny wheel, and Louise in the peaked seat by him.

"Pull in that dragging line," he ordered, and she obeyed, and cleared her damp and heavy hair and stared ahead. And on to the river's mouth the slim launch flew, with but a spatter, now and then, of sound, and when the first roller lifted and the breeze blew free in their faces, the last red light behind

and ahead the inky blackness, she found the man by her was laughing. Laughing, and putting about her shoulders a yellowed oilskin coat.

"Comrade," he broke forth, "it's an adventure alone to watch you—worth, indeed, a dozen mischances. I can see, I think—the marvel in your eyes. . . . I told you once of their quality."

"It's rough," she said, "and dark ahead. Is that the breakwater light?"

"I'd not know the thing if it was labeled," he retorted. "Eh?—the road's ahead of us—the long trail—and many a tough night by the way! And what brought you, comrade—tell me?"

"You know," she answered; "look ahead—a timber floating."

He spun the wheel and laughed his lightness. "You're here, for what? To save what? A little beast of the mills—a man of the colleges and the socialisms and the brotherhoods!"

"Surely," she muttered; "yes, you know!"

"A week ago you loved him—loved them all—these wonder workings of his dreams. But was it for this to-night you put your neck in danger?"

"I've not feared—what's there to fear?"

"There's a bright thing about you," he said; and then added, in his abrupt authoritative way: "here, hold the wheel, so. I'll look to the gasolene. No—off a bit—keep that light on your left—wide. She's rocking mightily—small wonder. Devil a load's she

ever carried like this—anarchy in the stern, a woman for pilot, and an engineman who does not know the top of the thing from the bottom."

"You said you did!" she cried.

"What odds? The man started her for me, and I was tired of the palaver on the dock. I wanted to get off—the night smelled good and free. . . . I wanted a swing in the dark—to go off plunging if I had to go. To tell the truth—between you and me—I was afraid of the police. But here—with you—here, hold your hand—feel this air blowing on your cheek, comrade—free air! Who'd be cooped in a bottle of a jail or mill or house? Eh?—feel this!" And he seized the wheel again from her and brought the boat quartering on, so that the third wave leaping, struck the bow and spattered them from head to foot. "And this!" he cried, "and this!" And again he sent the tiny craft against the east seas so that they showered her bow.

The girl did not move. He saw her pale face staring calmly on, the water trickling from her hair. "Are you mad?" she whispered.

"It's the mad who live buoyantly. Eh, come—forget you're you—great God, you women—you crawl about in stays and under rules tied to some duty or other—that's always my impatience with you! And yet, to-night I saw one face fate with as lordly a manner as I might have had."

"She dared confess?" Louise went on; "she told!"

"Beautifully. The soul in her—it leaped like a fire I'd touched."

"To save you," the girl muttered, "she dared—where is she?"

"By his side. I, in fact, rather blessed them. The thing was cut clear as a cameo—the woman rising there, unfearing—hot with it."

"You drove her to it—you maddened them all!"

"And excellently done. I assure you, it's something to make them stare at me confounded, if one even mentions truth to them. I, indeed, am the arch humorist of America. When the end comes you ought to hear me say something worth while."

"The end?"

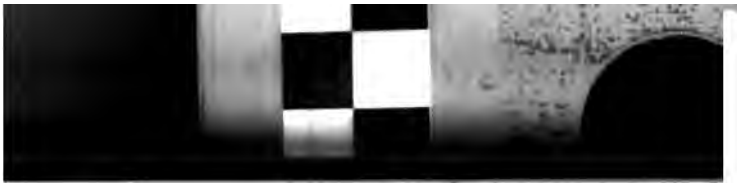
"Did you, really," he went on, with some solicitude, "expect to get out of here alive?"

She sat about to see him more clearly. "Alive? Why, when we make a landing up the north shore and you get safely off, I intend to take the first suburban back—"

He was watching the far line of tossing lights marking Sheridan Drive and the thinning districts. "You have a deal of faith," he answered dryly.

She was still while the throbbing engine tore the seas—it was not running so smoothly, and again he gave her the wheel and turned back to it.

He spoke to Karasac, crouched in the stern seat. The Pole snarled unintelligibly; he was beaten with fear, shivering with cold — they could see his white face glaring in that curious light



which comes from the proximity of a city reflected in the clouds. The rain had ceased, but the sky hung dark, the lake swept heavily from the east. At times the launch wallowed, hardly getting her head up before the next wave smote her; already there was water washing in the engine pit.

Rand came back and motioned off the starboard. "More in," he said laconically, "keep the shore line in sight. We've run a good bit and I think day's not far off."

"Where shall you land?" she said; "have you a thought of it?"

"Not the remotest. Keep on—would you lose a night like this? You—a creature of the cities—tell me—did you ever see a sunrise?"

"No."

"Then you've never lived. Come—one day of life. Comrade, it's hardly more than a week since I saw you, and here you are risking your neck with me. Eh? this is extraordinary! A night like this—to watch your eyes grow wide under the sunrise! It repays one for growing older—even for getting fat. . . . I found it unpleasant just now to stoop down to that engine."

"O, will you spoil it all?" she cried. "You've given much—and then you make it cheap with your talk. You, who might make men silent before you with something else than your brute wit—who might find a man's work—a giving to the higher law—to love!"

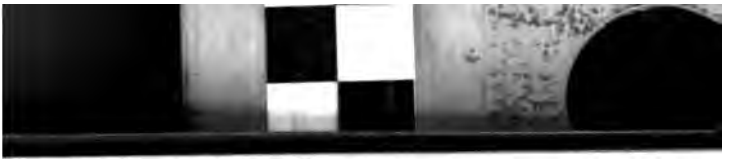
"Love"—he grimaced—"a powder that wom
sprinkle on their shoulders, and of which men car
away the imprints on their coats—until they get o
of the room . . . then they brush it off."

"I did not mean that," she retorted; "but to li
and serve."

"Your eyes," he put in, with his dry and ra
reserve; "it pleases you to have me speak of them

Then she would not look at him. And present
he went to Karasac, their voices coming to h
a muffled quarrel or chaffing. Her wrists had beg
aching with the strain of the wheel; she look
back at them, Rand at some interminable harangu
She braced her feet, cleared her eyes of the sting
water breaking on the bow, and watched ahea
And back they stood and quarreled, regardless
the wash of the seas in the pit, the jerky, interm
tent engine. Presently the import of it came . .
in this hour he had seen fit to lecture the anarchi
—a man with a broken arm—on the need of kee
ing cleaner—his finger-nails.

All untried and helpless she clung to the bra
wheel and made what shift she might of steerin
The seas were rising, the white ghosts leaped abo
the bow and dissolved upon her, the water runni
down inside the oilskin he had given her. And t
bleak, long shore-line rose clearer, and to east, und
the somber clouds, the light sifted dimly. And
again the seas viciously showered her until she be
blindly, she was conscious of his hand cl



ing on her own upon the wheel. His grave voice came:

"Comrade, you've done well. I merely waited to see if you'd cry out or shrink." He drew closer the coat about her; she wondered at her gratefulness when she said quietly: "Thank you."

Into the north they plunged, while the east lightened the bit of day, the yellow cliff, streaked with washes, blurred with shrub down to the very line of breakers; while here and there a proper farmstead rose far back, a cluster of village lights, a line of poles all dank. Rand watched seriously; at length he said: "Beyond that station ahead we'll take a chance on getting in. Highland Park is miles behind, but you can get the electric line back. Girl, you're cold, and Karasac, the brute, is asleep. Well, he'll need it before he's done with the road and me."

"And you!" she said, stirring to watch him. "If one but knew?" She went on in a sort of despair: "Your father—an old man waiting!"

"Tell him that the last you saw of his son he was at a country station still clamoring that his stomach was hungry and his back wet—that he had no other wisdom except to try get food and fire, and something of a disaster he was making. But say that he wore no man's collar."

She could not smile, her face was weary. In an hour he would be gone . . . he would leave no word save the uncaring echo of his life.

And as the launch labored on with the gray

clouds lightening, the east seas coming troubled and unceasing, they were silent, for, wet, under a dirty dawn, you can get neither wit nor passion, but only the animal-enduring patience of the trapped. Then, again the engine fluttered. Rand gave the wheel to her and went back to awaken Karasac.

The fellow moved—then, bewildered, leaped up and fell half over the gasolene tank, held by braces on the gunwale. The can tore away and as Karasac struggled back, a sheet of flame sprang from the pit, and then, with the thunder of the explosion in her ears, she crouched higher in the bow and steadied the wheel. That was all—the thing was done; she looked about to see the engine pit black, with margins of tiny fire here, there, starting, dying, a dingy column of flecked smoke rising. The launch was still, save for a gasp of water somewhere in her frail body—still, save for the next pounding sea. Karasac stood upright, yelling on the decked afterspace. Rand's head rose by the boat's side; he clung to the torn gunwale, and then began working his way forward, hand over hand.

Louise had not screamed—merely stared, fascinated by the burning oil washing on the water in the pit, drawing her feet above it. Rand's blackened face was near her; he looked up—smiled. "Be still," he said, "we'll wash in—it's not far. Are you hurt?"

"No," she answered; "but you?"

He was trying to raise himself and peer along the [redacted]ail at the boat's interior. "A pipe smashed

through the metal," he said, "she's taking in water broadside on. Is the gear off?"

"I suppose—" the wheel was idle in her hands; there was a futile rattle of cord and chain somewhere. "But you—come, try get in."

"She's filling—she'll not stand more weight. I'm very well here."

The blue haze drifted; the last fire wisps were struck out by the smashing seas—only aft a blue tongue flickered, with Karasac's black and white face staring at it. Broadside on, the launch drifted, down to the beading along her sides.

The girl looked calmly off. There was the yellow-washed bank of earth, the green fringing willows, the line of boulders whitened by the waves. It was not far. North and south the gray wastes of lake ran, but in the east a pink rift widened. The air was sweet, strong with life, the wind not rough—the storm had passed. The day came as a pink flower might have opened.

"It isn't far," she said, and laid her hand upon his; "can you swim? You mustn't worry about me."

His deep voice found its humor: "Did you imagine so? We're doing very well. In ten minutes we'll be on bottom—if she floats that long."

"I think," she said, watching him intently, "you're hurt!"

"A little—something struck me. Go on the bow—it's higher."

"Where?" she cried, and brushed back the hair

from his blackened and burned face, round, heavy, the eyebrows gone. The next wave over him flung a bloody froth upon her—she crowded nearer, staring. "Rand," she cried, "tell me!" Then she started up and ran back through the wreck. "Come, help me get him in!"

But the other man, crouched on the stern of the sinking boat, yelled insanely, shook his head. The girl, erect in the middle of the pit, her wet hair stringing, cursed him. "Damn you, then—stay!" she cried, and ran forward, kneeling to seize Rand's arm, for he had sunk lower, his eyes closing. At her cry he opened them, from his lips a bloody trail floating away. The next sea buried him . . . it seemed a day before the boat heaved up, with her clinging to him. "You're bleeding fast," she muttered; "Rand—hold to me—hold!"

"Bottom," he whispered; "my feet, wait—a moment." The boat struck with a jar and a dizzy heeling in the waves. She clung to his coat lapels, and tried to beat the water from his face, her black, coarse hair tangled in his and about the brass rail and floating away on the next racing wave.

"Keep off," he murmured; "she's grounded now—she'll smash you."

"Rand!" she cried; "hold—hold. . . . O, a little longer!"

The next wave buried them again; their faces hardly rose. The launch was wrenched from beneath them, rose, sank, was rolled, smashing

Rand from his feet. The mill-hand was washed against them, his elbow struck Rand's cheek, he clung fast, yelling; and the big man staggered on, his feet among the boulders, fighting on, with both the others clinging to him, stumbling on, carrying them with the fury of the waves on their backs. He fell in the shallows, and then was crawling on, with the girl's hand trying to upraise him; while Karasac had left them, leaping on to the shingly beach.

But the other man stopped, lying tired, still, in the racing water, with the girl pleading, lifting, at his arm. "Come—another yard—just a step more."

"For what?" His voice took its old music. "The thing's done well enough. Here—get this from my pocket—for the little beast-brother. You'll see him well away?" He fumbled in his coat; her hand went to clasp the object. "Beast-brother," he went on, "comrade, you'll set him on the road. West . . . and say to him that I was not unkind after all—was I?"

She cried her terror at his weakness, on his face the gray of the sea. His tired eyes opened.

"Eh? Go leave me. Little comrade—go back. The other man—he's right—go serve them, somehow." And as she would not leave him, fighting to raise his head above the waves, he went on: "You'd like to die here with me, eh? Well, the pity that it's denied you . . . you'll be lonely, comrade. Sacrifice is a gift for few."

And when she cried out of her mighty loneliness

he again opened his eyes, his glance down over his helpless body, ever the first satire at himself: "I told you when the end came I'd say something worth while. Eh? And now—nothing—except that I always insisted it was a tragedy to grow fat!"

She knelt in the water, dragging at his heavy head; she fought the lake from him, kissing the burned face again and again in the froth of the waves. Then she looked up to find the world above blue, the clouds slipping to the west as a handkerchief from a crystal sphere. Karasac sat at the foot of the bank and about him the blackbirds sang in the willows.

The girl looked down at the twist of blood from Rand's side, then went on to the Pole, scrambling up the muddy bank and calling clearly to him.

He followed her. They went across the level green, the many-twinkling lake behind, and ahead the land with houses white, detached, here and there, with budding trees about. A line of telegraph poles followed a cut in the earth, and when Louise reached this she climbed the fence, and he came after. When they reached the cindered track between the rails, the girl looked up. A sparrow balanced itself on the telegraph wire among a string of water drops shining against the sky, and ahead of them the road ran, vanishing to immensity, sky, earth, poles, rails, converging to a point. The morning was of marvelous stillness.

The girl looked at the man slinking by her, his

hat in his hand, his wet clothes dripping, his thin face awed, obedient, silent. She reached the packet to him.

"Rand meant it for you," she said, "it's a thousand dollars, I believe. Rand wants you to get away West. Rand wants you to be free, to be kind, to be happy. Rand wants everything for you—*everything!*"

He took the wet parcel, staring at it, and she turned and climbed the muddy bank to the fields.

She could see Rand's body, moved now and then by the lessening waves. With serious practicality she turned to watch the other man. He had gone along the road westward on his way, a tiny figure now, a single black point on the green earth, the center of an immensity, the dome of the sky hung like a magician's crystal. After a moment she went back to her dead.

At two o'clock, dressed in a fresh white lawn—for the spring sun was warm—she came to Ennisley's study by the side door and sat down at her type-writer. They heard it clicking and came hurriedly from the front of the house where they had waited since dawn. They crowded about her, the father with his shaking lip, old John with his coo, the pioneer mother, and Corbett, pale and still, with his wife's arm about his neck as he sat on a chair arm. They cried out at her composure, her neat gowning fitted to the day's work.

She told them as much as was needed, and what now they should do.

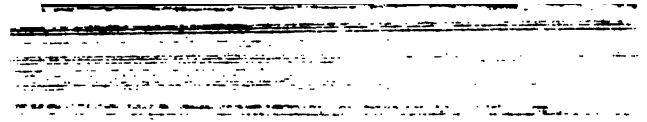
"But, Louise," the wife whispered at the last, "he sent back no word—nothing—*nothing?*"

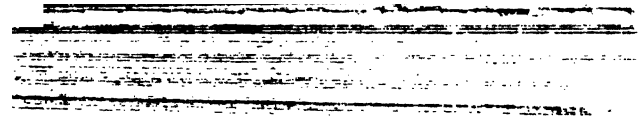
"He meant for us to keep on working the best we could," the girl answered.

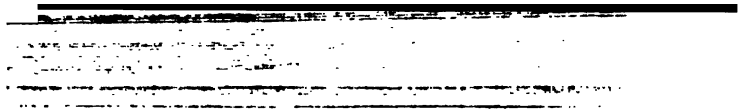
The next day, in fact, she was transcribing the professor's new lecture.

Still it was against nature that she should stay—within the month she resigned, quietly, despite their protests, to take up some sort of settlement work in Pittsburg. She wrote, now and then, in friendly fashion, and then, within the year, they lost her; when Corbett wrote happily that a son was born to Demetra, she did not answer. After a few years they recalled her, now and then, as people will—a quiet girl, faithful, pale, unpretty save for her marvelous eyes of blue—they supposed she might be lonely except for her work.

THE END







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